LOW KICKS

Advanced Martial Arts Kicks for Attacking the Lower Gates

A Comprehensive Study of the Art of Realistic Kicking Below the Belt

by MARC DE BREMAEKER

With hundreds of applications from Karate, Krav Maga, Muay Thai, Tae Kwon Do, MMA, Kung Fu, and more...

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Recommended reading, by the same author (martialartkicks@gmail.com):

"Plyo-Flex Training for Explosive Martial arts kicks" published (2013) by TURTLE PRESS (www.turtlepress.com)

"The Essential Book of Martial arts Kicks" published (2010) by Tuttle Publishing (www.tuttlepublishing.com)

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DEDICATION

In Memoriam

This book is dedicated to the loving memory of my father.

Andre Felix De Bremaeker

If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.

~ Sir Isaac newton

Acknowledgements

Without the active support of my wife and life companion, this book would not have come to life. Being an athlete in her own right, she understands the meaning of hard work and dedication.

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Dotan De Bremaeker

Most photographs have been taken by the author and **Aviva Giveoni**. But special thanks have to be extended to talented **Grace Wong** for the long sessions. Thank you also to professional photographer **Guli Cohen**: some of the photographs in this book have been extracted from the photo sessions he gracefully did for previous volumes.

The drawings in this book are mine. Everything that I have learned about line art, I have done so from professional Illustrator **Shahar Navot,** who illustrated *The Essential Book of Martial Arts Kicks*. Thanks!

If you are near the enemy, make him believe you are far from him.

If you are far from the enemy, make him believe you are near.

~ Sun-Tzu

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Foreword

A goal is not always meant to be reached, it often serves simply as something to aim at.

~ Bruce Lee

My Martial Arts career started with Judo at age 6. Judo was pretty new and a bit mystical in the Western World, but a mysterious Oriental Art teaching how to use one's opponent's strength against him was a pretty attractive proposition for a wimpy kid. And the decorum and costume trappings made it a unique selling proposition. That is, until the Kung Fu craze of the Seventies…Bruce Lee et al.

In my opinion, what fascinated the Western masses, and the teen-ager I was then, was mostly the fantastic kicking maneuvers of the fights of these Kung Fu movies. The bulk of the fight scenes were based on spectacular kicking exchanges, the likes of which we had never seen before. We had been conditioned by boxing and the fair-play of Queensbury's rules, and had no idea one could fight like that. It was also the first time most people in Europe and America had seen a well-rounded Martial Art comprising all fighting disciplines: kicking, grappling, striking…*Judo* was nice, but I also wanted to learn to kick. I took up *Shotokan Karate*, as it was the only one available yet, and the most developed outside of Japan.

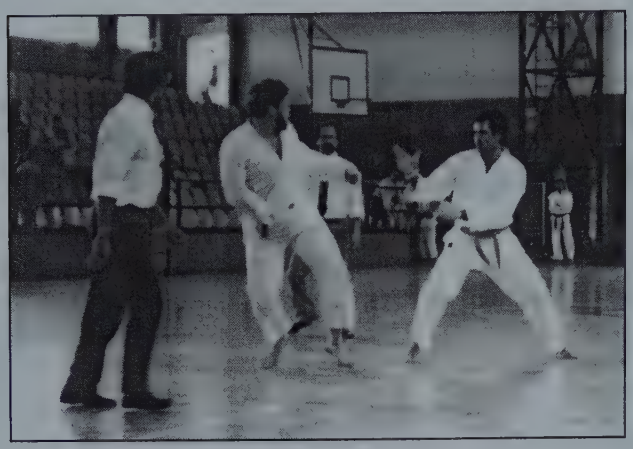
Shotokan Karate is very well organized didactically and emphasizes tradition, hard training and basic work. Though it is not an art known for extravagant kicks, I never stopped practicing it, or a Shotokan-derived style, during all my athletic years. In all athletic endeavors, basic work is of the essence.

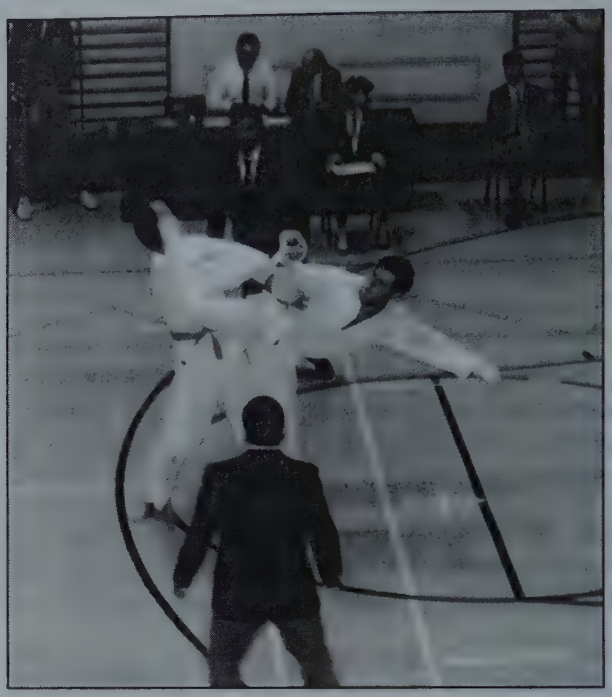
But in parallel, I started to explore other arts, a few years at a time, as opportunities and geography allowed. During my long Martial Arts career, I did practice assiduously: *Karatedo* of the *Wado-ryu, Shotokai* and *Kyokushinkai* schools, Full-contact Karate, Taekwondo, Savate-Boxe Francaise and two styles of Ju-Jitsu. Less intensively, I also did train in Sankukai *Karate, Capoeira, Krav Maga* and some soft styles of *Kung-Fu*. This is how and where I developed my individual methods and own understanding of the Art of Kicking, and also formed the basis from which to start my own personal research.

Sometime during this eclectic career, my travels took me to the *Shi-Heun* school of Sensei *Sidney Faige. Shi –Heun* is a *Shotokan*-based style mixed with *Judo* practice. The style emphasizes extreme conditioning, total fighting under various realistic rules sets and the personal quest for what works best for oneself. As this was only 1983, this was definitely a precursor to the much later phenomena of Mixed Martial Arts. The fighting rules in the dojo were very close to today's UFC and relatives, but this did not hinder the success of the students in more traditional fighting tournaments, under milder rules. The hard training under all types of rules made it such that the direct disciples of Sensei Faige did roam the tournament scene undefeated for years.

Sensei Sidney Faige with the winning Israeli National Karate team. Marc De Bremaeker and Roy Faige are on the right.

Points tournament fighting was mainly WUKO (World Union of Karate Organizations) in these days. It generally boringly consisted in 2 competitors jumping up and down, waiting for the other to initiate a move, so as to be able to stop-reverse punch him. When my name was called for a fight in one of those points tournaments, there was spontaneous applause from the spectators, as they knew they were going to see, finally, some kicking. I apologize if this sounds like a boast, but the point I am trying to make and exemplify is that spectators and fans came for martial arts with kicks, not for an unrealistic form of boxing.



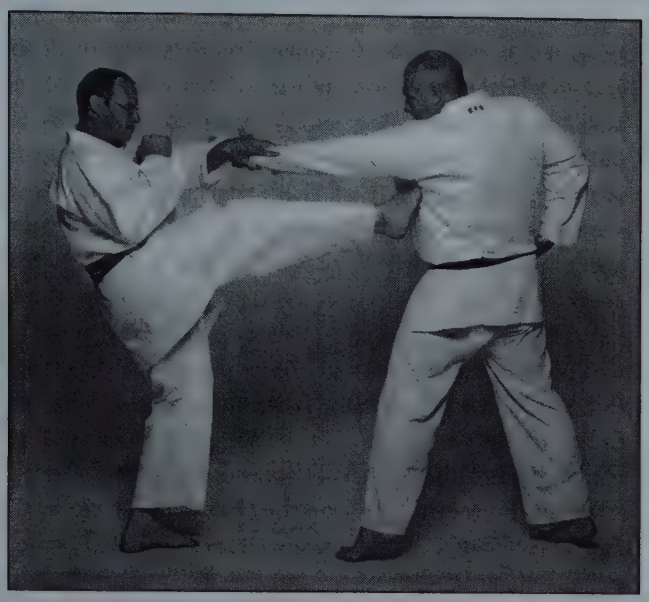


above: The authors fighting off the finals of a points-tournament in 1987

right: Marc De Bremaeker, in tournament, kicking

It is my strong belief that kicking is a big part of what made the Oriental Martial Arts so appealing. As I have already mentioned in articles and previous publications, I also do firmly argue that **kicking is more efficient than punching.** This usually makes many people stand up and disagree. This is a debate that has been going on for years, and I respectfully ask to be able to complete my sentence: I strongly believe that **kicking is more efficient than punching, but proficiency takes much more time and work.** When corrected this way, I hope my position will cause much less arguing. And I want to detail my position a bit.

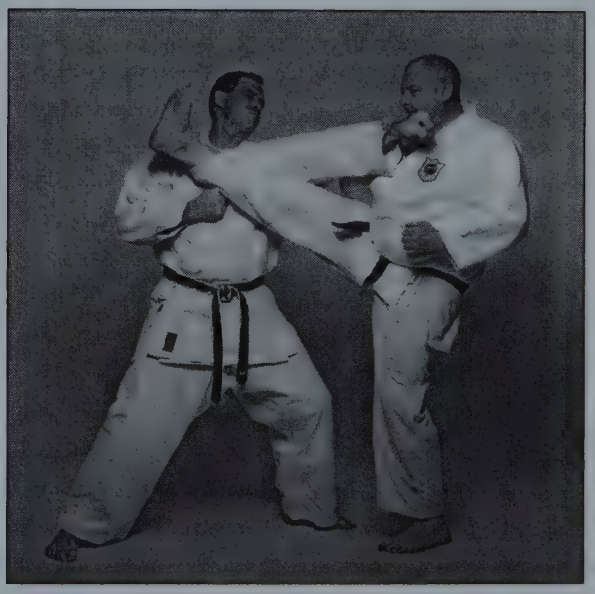
Kicking is more efficient than punching:



. . . because of the longer range

. . . because the muscles of the leg are much more powerful than those of the arms

. . . because kicking targets, unlike punching, go from the toes up to the head



. . . because of the surprise effect: People still tend to expect less to be kicked than punched.

I readily admit that opponents of my position do have valid points. They will point out that kicks are inherently slower than punches, can be jammed because they only work at long ranges, and cannot be delivered from all positions. It is my experience that, after a lot of dedicated work, kicks can be as swift as punches, and can be used at all ranges and from all positions.

During all my training years, I invested a lot of time, personal drilling and research into Kicking Arts from all over the world. I tried all training tips gathered and I tried out all kicks' variations in actual fights and tournaments. I so developed a personal kicking style based on my personal history. During this quest, I came across many treatises,

but very few actually dedicated to kicking. The few works I found about kicking, although generally very good, were usually style-restricted, or unorganized. As I never found the kind of book I would have liked to have when I started my Martial Arts career, I decided to write it myself. There had never been an attempt, to the best of my knowledge, to compile and organize all the different kick types and variations, in order to offer a basis of personal exploration or to serve as a reference work for the kick-lover. I did try to start this, probably imperfectly, with my previous book "***The Essential Book of Martial Arts Kicks***" covering the essential basic kicks families. I hope to continue this work with the present volume about the important **Low Kicks**, and I pray that this work will be built upon by others. As I did underline that kicking proficiency requires a lot of drilling, I have also published a work about the basic drills that will help you reach the next level of proficiency. As in all athletic endeavors, it is the basic drills that will build the strong foundation needed and to which the really good athlete will come back to for further progress. "***Plyo-Flex Training for Explosive Martial Arts Kicks and other Performance Sports***" does present those basic but so-important exercises one should regularly practice for continuous improvement of kicking proficiency.

And last but certainly not least: It is important to underline that my strong views do not in any way or form try to denigrate the punching arts. My philosophy is that Martial Arts are a whole with a world of different possible emphasis: A complete martial artist should be proficient in punching, kicking, throwing, grappling, evading, and more. But the artist will have his own preferences and particular skills, of course. And now let me add the obvious: *There is no kicking without punching proficiency!* Punching is necessary for closing the gap, feinting, setting up a kick, following up, and more. This will be clear from most of the applications described in this work. And punching is sometimes the best or the only answer in some situations. I have known some extraordinary punching martial artists, using kicks only as feints and set-ups. On the other hand, great kickers, like *Bill "Superfoot" Wallace*, were extremely skilled punchers as well! (I remember well, in one of Bill's seminars, doing more push-ups in an hour than in the whole previous month). Punch and Kick: well-rounded is the secret!

This leads me naturally to another obvious point: I would not want my views to be misunderstood as an appeal to always kick when fighting, and especially not to always *high-kick*. Not only is it not suitable for all morphologies and mind sets, but even the best kicker in the world should **not** deliver a high kick **just because he can**! A kick or a high kick should be delivered only *when* and *because* it is suitable for the specific situation the fighter is currently in. Obvious, maybe, but worth reminding! In someone else's words:

Take things as they are. Punch when you have to punch.
Kick when you have to kick.

~ Bruce Lee

Introduction

This book is not a "How to" book for the beginner, but, hopefully, a reference work for the experienced martial artist. It presupposes the knowledge of stances, footwork, and concepts of centerline, guards, distance, evasions. It also expects from the reader a good technical level in his chosen Martial style, including kicking. As this work is building upon the Essential basic level towards more sophisticated kicking maneuvers, all Essential kicks are considered mastered from the author's point of view. The reader is invited to consult previous work already mentioned above. This book is intended as a tool for self-exploration and research about kicking outside experienced Artists' specific style. Therefore, the description of the different kicks is very short and typical examples are only briefly explained. The author relies more on photos and illustrations to exemplify his point. Let the reader try it and adapt it to his liking and morphology.

The author tends to prefer drawings over photographs to be able to underline salient points sometimes hidden in photos.

The experienced trainee will probably notice quickly that the basic background of the author is Japanese *Karate*. This cannot be avoided but was not deliberate. This book aspires to be as "style-less" as possible, as its purpose is to bridge across the different schools on the basis of common immutable principles. The author's philosophy is that Martial Arts are an interconnected whole, where styles are just interpretations of some principles and their adaptation to certain sets of strategies, rules, cultural constraints, or morphologies. It is one and same thing, although it may seem different from different angles. In the pictures and illustrations, the reader can see technical differences and adaptations from different styles. This is done on purpose to underscore the style-less philosophy of the treatise. Sometimes the foot of the standing leg is flat on the floor, as required in traditional Japanese styles, and sometimes the heel is up as in certain deliveries of Korean arts. It should be clear that the biomechanical principles are identical for trained artists and the small differences of emphasis are meaningless. It is more important for a trainee to adapt the technique to his morphology and preferences, once it is well mastered. This book definitely does not pretend to present an axiomatic way to kick! In the same vein, arms during kicking are sometimes close to the body in hermetic guard, and sometimes loose and counterbalancing the kicking move. Hands can be open, or fists tight.

Like in previous efforts, it has proved very difficult to name and organize the kicks into and within groups. The author has given the techniques descriptive names in English, and whenever possible commonly used names. But the more complex, exotic and hybrid kicks have sometimes either several different appellations in use or none, while being difficult to describe. The names the author has chosen could certainly be disputed and improved upon by some. For the most basic kicks common to all styles, we have added the respective original foreign names. The author apologizes in advance to the purists of all styles: It is clear that the description of a technique cannot be in all details valid for all styles (for example, the basic front kick is taught differently in Shotokan karate than in TaeKwonDo). The original foreign names in Japanese, Korean, Chinese or Portuguese are just there as an indication for further research by the reader. It should also be noted that some techniques have different names in different schools of the same art! For the more complex or exotic kicks, we have purposely omitted original names. Only when a kick is especially typical of a certain style, did we mention it, as a tribute to the specific school.The author also apologizes for his arbitrary transcription of foreign names, as purists could dispute the way it was done.

The kicks presented in this volume are tagged "Advanced". This does not necessarily mean that they are more difficult to execute than the Essential basic kicks. On the contrary. Besides being a requisite of some form of classification, it mainly means that the principles behind the "basic" kicks should be first thoroughly mastered. A low front kick is relatively easy to perform. But for maximum power, it is important to develop it just like a basic mid-level front kick, with chambering, kicking through and chamber back. And the principles of the leg development stay the same for the more difficult Flying Front Kick. Once the principles behind the basic front kick are mastered, all other "advanced" kicks will be faster and more powerful. *This is all about mastering the basics and principles first,* and only later trying out variations in all kinds of situations, fancier or not. This is, by the way, true for any other physical activity. But because advanced kicks are more a variation on the theme of their

underlying basic kicks, they will be presented in all their complexity by many variations in specific applications.

This volume will not detail Essential basic kicks. If needed for the clarity of the narrative, some of them will be very briefly illustrated as a reminder. This volume deals with **Low Kicks** only, as a variation of all six basic categories of Essential Kicks presented in previous work (Front, Side, Back, Roundhouse, Hook and Crescent Kicks). Further volumes are in preparation to present the spectacular "Flying kicks", the tactical "Stop kicks", the situational "Ground kicks, the complex Double kicks, the sneaky Feint kicks, the surprising Suicide kicks and the devastating Joint kicks.

Some advanced kicks have been omitted, as the author felt he had to draw the line somewhere. Again the decision was arbitrary, and could be considered as open for discussion. First have been omitted the whole range of nuances of a given kick: As already mentioned, the same basic kicks are delivered in slightly different ways in all different styles and schools. The small differences come from the different emphasis of each style, and do not alter the basic principles. The author therefore described the kicks in the way his own experience dictates as best, and each reader can adapt it to his own personality. Many possible variations are presented for completeness in the applications though.

Secondly, hybrid kicks variations have been omitted, as the infinite number of intermediate possible deliveries in between two kicks would make this endeavor ridiculous. For example, many possible kicks as hybrids of front and roundhouse kicks exist, each one with different levels of emphasis on the "front" side and the "roundhouse" side.

Kicks combinations, and kick-punch combinations are infinite in numbers and will not be presented. Knee strikes, although very effective and versatile, will not be presented; for the purpose of this work, they will not be considered as kicks.

The remaining Low Kicks, which will be presented in this work, will be so, generally, in a set descriptive way: After a brief general introduction and the description of the kick (mainly by illustrations), the main key points to remember for a good execution will be noted. Please remember that the book is intended for conversant martial artists. The relevant targets to be kicked in most applications will be mentioned, although only general targets will be mentioned: The specific and precise vulnerable points are out of the scope of this volume. Examples of typical application will then be detailed and illustrated. The typical application will generally be, unless irrelevant, a detailed use or set up of the given kick in a tournament-type situation. This will generally be a movements combination based on alternating different attack angles or/and levels (For example: hi-lo-hi, or/and outside/inside/outside), or the Progressive Indirect Attack principle as it is called by *Jeet Kune Do* artists. The tactical principle involved will not be detailed or presented systematically though, as it is beyond the scope of this volume. Of course, those applications will also usually be relevant to real life situations, and training work. Whenever possible, specific training tips to improve the given kick will be detailed. The specific training section will be brief and will only deal with the very specific characteristics of the kick and the ways to perfect them; general kick training guidelines are outside the scope of this book. The training of a low kick is generally also the drilling of the corresponding Essential basic kick. Last, and in order to widen the scope of applications, an additional example of the use of the kick will be presented, generally more suitable to a self-defense or mixed martial arts application.

And now, let us go to LOW KICKS...

What counts is not necessarily the size of the dog in the fight - it's the size of the fight in the dog.

~ Dwight D. Eisenhower

Low Kicks: General

1. The soccer low front kick
2. The front low kick
3. The groin front kick
4. The high chambered stomp front kick
5. The tilted heel low front kick
6. The low roundhouse kick
7. The low straight leg roundhouse kick
8. The low straight leg roundhouse sweep
9. The low downward roundhouse kick
10. The low hook kick
11. The low spin back hook kick
12. The low side kick
13. The low side stomp kick
14. The back low kick
15. The back low stomp kick
16. The heel outside low kick
17. The angular kick to the knee
18. The front pushing stop kick to knee scrape
19. The flying stomp kick

Low Kick in tournament – Marc De Bremaeker

A goal is not always meant to be reached, it often serves simply as something to aim at

~ Bruce Lee

Introduction to Low Kicks

Low kicks are no doubt the most practical and effective kicks for self-defense. There are plenty of reasons for that:

- First and foremost, they are relatively easy to master and do not require outstanding flexibility, or even warming up for that matter.
- Low kicks are also very fast, as they start from close to their targets. They can be used from very close and with nearly no limitations.
- They also are easy "not-to-telegraph": with some training, they can be lashed out with a completely immobile upper body.
- They also are very difficult to block: You cannot bend over to block them, as it would be suicidal, and evasion is generally the only viable countermeasure. Although you can sometimes block a low kick with your shin, or absorb the blow with a fleshy area of your leg, it is usually best to remove the target from the attack vector.
- But above all, the low kicks are extremely effective because of the sensitivity of their natural targets: the groin of course, but also the nerve-rich sides of the thighs, the knee from all sides—definitely the most fragile joint of the body—the painfully sensitive shins, the aptly-named Achilles' tendon, the ankles and the toes. The knee is an especially attractive target: because of its anatomical build, it is extremely vulnerable and can be dislocated with very little force from all angles: front, back and both sides. An opponent with a wounded knee will be both suffering and practically immobilized. *Bruce Lee* used to underline the fact that a child had enough power to break a grown man's knee.

It is therefore clear why Low Kicks would be the weapon of choice in a self-defense situation: formidable, especially from close up.

Many schools, mostly of non-sport Martial Arts, *do not kick above the belt*, on the basis of a simple risk/reward argument: Low kicks are very effective without the need to endanger you too much. For example: *Tai Chi Chuan, Wing Chun* and other soft styles of Kung Fu; some Okinawan karate schools and many more. I personally do not support this approach, but it is a valid tactical choice, and it is also certainly true for some fighters with certain morphologies or personalities.

Although low kicks used to be forbidden in the sport applications of many Martial Arts, they are nowadays practiced and legitimized in more and more of the hardest of fighting arts. It must be underlined that their practice is extremely important for the complete Martial Artist, as training in a low kick-free environment will cause the development of bad habits and a false sense of security. In the real world, you should expect being kicked in the groin and shins!

I can illustrate this point with a personal anecdote: As a young successful and cocky non- and full-contact karate fighter, I took up *Savate-Boxe Francaise* in Brussels in the late seventies, to complement my training. My first fights were a disaster and did cut me fast to size: Every time I tried to attack, I was stopped in my tracks by painful "*Coups de pieds bas*" (soccer-type low front kicks to the shins) to which I was not accustomed, as there was no low kicking in most types of karate tournaments. It made me painfully aware of the fact that the way you train and spar, in any Martial Art, will cause you to adopt very specific habits, often veering you away from realistic fighting. [Another example, opposite in fact, of this is the inability of tough and fierce low-kicking *Kyokushinkai* fighters, to deal with straight punching to the face, which is forbidden by their competitive fighting rules.]

Low kicks are an important integral part of any realistic Martial Arts: you must practice them, train just like for any other type of kicking, and spar in a setting where they are allowed. Only if you are aware that you can be low-kicked will you learn to correctly gauge distance and the danger zone in relation to your opponent.

Training

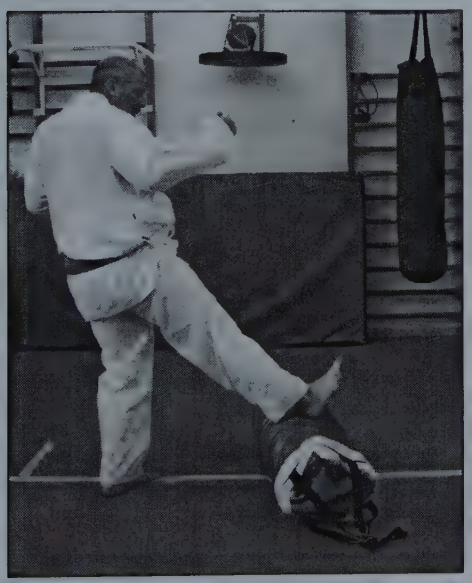
The fact that Low Kicks are relatively easy to learn and to deliver does not mean that you can avoid hard training and assiduous practice. Big mistake! You should treat those kicks just like all others: practice hard for speed, power, timing and a no-telltale delivery. Practice them in versatile combinations and as stop-kicks, use them as checking-up or attrition kicks. You must drill every aspect of these kicks—just like with all other kicks—until they become second nature. Most specific training drills are identical to those of the basic Essential Kick

the low kick is derived from. And general drills for kick explosiveness are as relevant to low kicks as to regular and high kicks. The reader is invited to consult "*Plyo-Flex Training for Explosive Martial Arts Kicks*" for a basic training regimen built on scientific principles and based on the combination of Plyometrics and Intense Stretching.

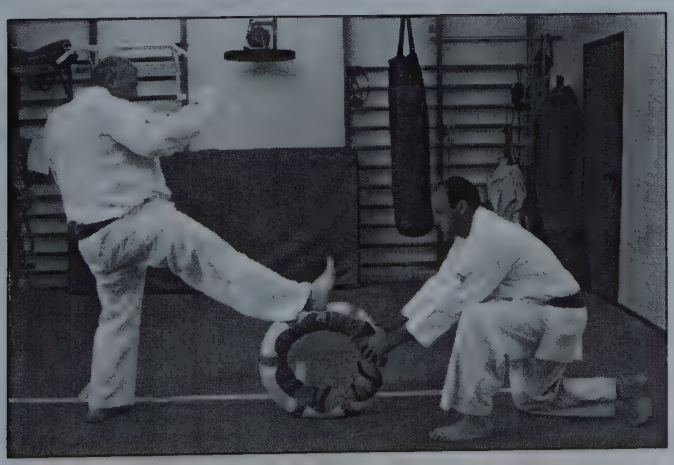
There are, though, some common pointers in most low kicks-training methods.

You should train for power, just like high kicks, by hitting for example the long hanging heavy bag, a standing bag held by a partner, a lying bag or a tire held by a partner. Use what will provide a more realistic "give" for the kick. A regular hanging bag is usually not very suitable for drilling kicks below the groin area. I personally like the old tire because of the penetrating "feel" you can get when kicking it.

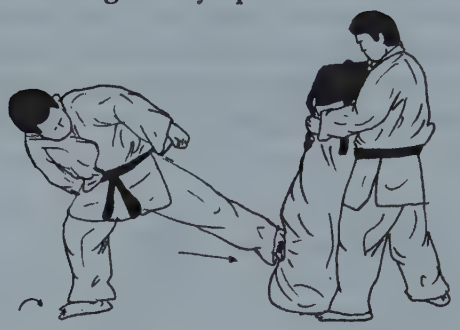
Hit fast, powerfully, and an inch *into* the target; but remember that leg retraction is as important as with high kicks (unless it is a *stomping* kick). When you practice low kicks for power, always remember to also concentrate on an *un-telegraphed delivery*.



Drill low kicks on a lying bag or an old tire



Drill on a bag held by a partner



When training for low kicks, it is also important to remember that you will always be close to your opponent at delivery, and therefore your guard must be up! A good way to drill this into your head is to train with your hands tied up with a belt passing to the back of your neck. This way you train both high guard and un-telegraphed delivery.

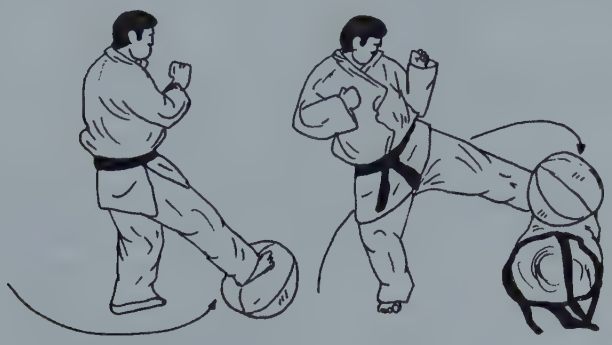
As mentioned for power training, a very useful target for the practice of below-the-knee low kicks is the used tire, held by a partner. You can also use it lying down for stomping kicks.

Use a belt to tie your hands in guard; drill a no-telltales-delivery

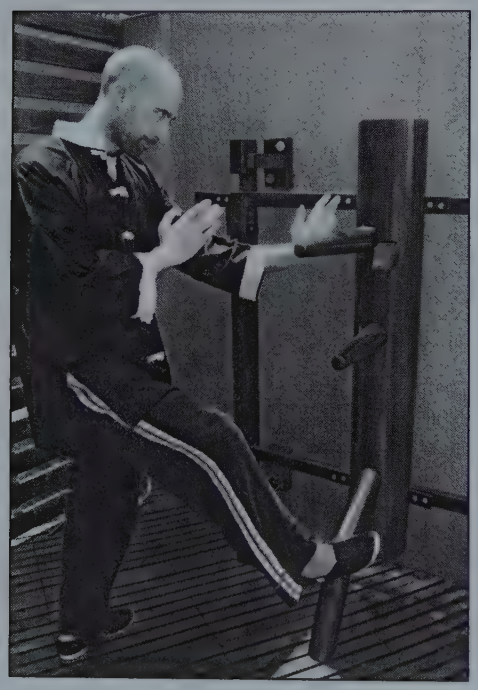
Stomp on the old tire

The old tire held by a partner

The medicine-ball is of great use for practice: lying on the floor for ankle and lower shin kicks, and set on a lying heavy bag for knee-high kicks. You should kick the ball with a football/soccer mind: send the ball as far as possible! Of course, Kung Fu artists will also use the Wooden Dummy illustrated in the Photo below.



The use of the medicine ball for low kick practice



Wing Chun's *Mook Jong*; the Wooden Dummy

Train for accuracy on hanging tennis balls: You should have balls hanging at mid-shin, knee, mid-thigh and groin levels. Examples will be shown in the text.

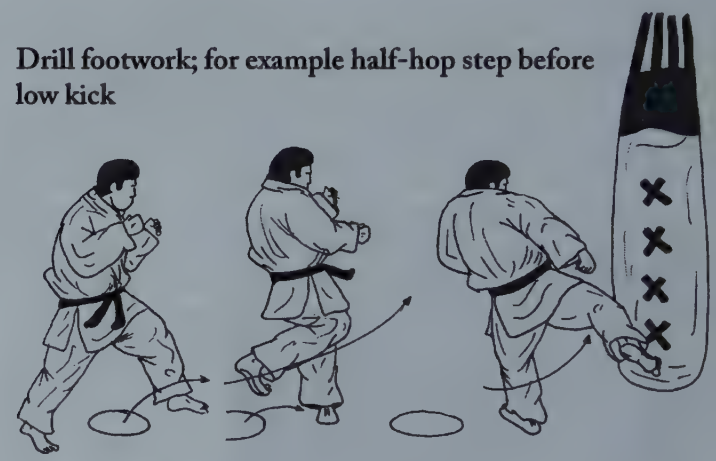
But the most important exercise in low kicking training is partner sparring: use protective gear and work on your timing and speed against a moving opponent. Use shin-guards and striking pads, and always be very careful with the knee joint.

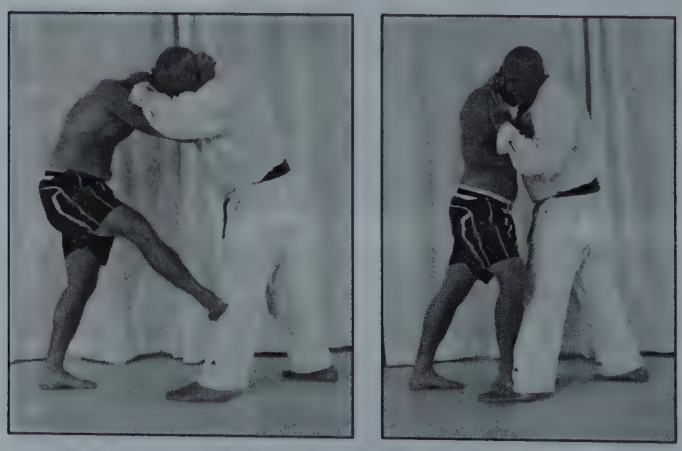
There are two more drills that I think are of the utmost importance, and that basically are about *range* and *distance*: You should train for the delivery of unexpected low kicks from the *outer* range, and you should train for *automatically* low-kicking when you get to clinching range:

Train for low kicks from a long-kicking range, by using footwork only (shuffling, steps, angled steps, jumping,...). Only after having mastered this should you start including feints or additional moves to help you close the gap: It is about the speed of the footwork first!

You should train for various suitable low kicks in the clinching position: Work with a partner and alternate. You should then train for getting into clinch and simultaneously kicking: It should become second nature to you to automatically launch a low kick as soon as you get close to clinching.

Drill footwork; for example half-hop step before low kick





Clinching should automatically bring up immediate low kicking

To Chamber or Not to Chamber?

In previous work (*The Essential Book of Martial Arts Kicks*), we have covered many basic kicks with an infinite array of variations, as we are trying to cover the whole realm of Martial Arts kicking in a style-less manner. Every kick usually has plenty of small possible variations, specific to some styles or schools, or simply more adapted to one's morphology or personality. Low Kicks are much less codified that the basic kicks of most Martial Arts, and there are more than one "correct" way to deliver them. One of the most significant personal inputs that can be introduced in the kick delivery is the amount of chambering.

First as a rule of thumb, a low kick must only be chambered, at the maximum, to the point where natural leg extension brings the foot to the target. There is no point in chambering the knee to waist level in order to deliver a simple straight Front Kick to the ankle (unless it is a stomping kick). And some schools advocate even no chambering at all, arguing that the sensitivity of the targets makes the pursuit of maximum power by chambering superfluous. I definitely say that this is up to you! Just remember the following and get to your own personal conclusion:

Maximum chambering will give you much more power, but will make your kick slower and easier to detect. It is a must, though, in most stomping kicks. And then, one kick could be enough to finish up a fight...

No chambering will make a surprisingly fast and indiscernible kick, but inherently less powerful. On the other hand, if it is successful, it will allow easily for more fast kicks to follow up, and maybe a full-chambered one at the end...

I personally think that the right answer is very much in the middle somewhere, like often in life. But I also believe that there is no "right" answer.

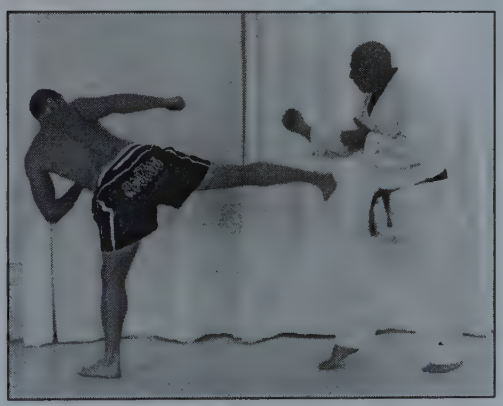
Tactics

Low kicks are especially great as stop-kicks or as counterattacks. The author is currently working on a specific book about Stop Kicks where low kicks will definitely star.

Being fast-reaching kicks, they can be used to foil a developing attack or an attack on the verge of being launched. The low kick can target the opponent's front leg, or a stepping leg or a kicking leg, and therefore foil the attack while inflicting damage and pain. Several examples will be presented randomly in this book. Further text on the theory and applied practice of stop-kicking will be presented in future work, but many examples of the use of Low Kicks as stop-kicks will be presented here.

Low kicks are also great for counterattacks of all types: you are close to the opponent and have blocked or evaded his attacks, which puts him mentally or even physically, off-balance. Some typical examples will be presented in the book. A very typical example is the low-kick follow-up of a classical *Shorinji Kempo* evasion technique called "*Hiki-Mi*", where the midsection of the body is suddenly pulled back, just enough to evade an incoming kick or punch, with minimal move of guard or feet position. It is then very easy to low kick the opponent as his kicking foot lands.

Low kick as a stop-kick to the standing leg by *Roy Faige*



An example of *Hiki-Mi* evasion; opportunity for a low kick follow-up

Typical Shorinji-Kempo

Presentation

For the people who have read "*The Essential Book of Martial arts Kicks*" and/or "*Plyo-Flex Training for Explosive Martial arts Kicks*", the presentation of this book will be slightly different than previous work: There will be much less formal *Description* and *Key Points*, as Low Kicks are much less orthodox and codified than basic kicks. On the other hand, many more examples of *Typical applications* and/or *Self-defense* applications will be presented, as there are many variations of these kicks with special and specific uses; and it is important to present them for the completeness of this book. The *Specific training* tips will be more succinct, as a general overview of training methods has already been given in previous books.

We will keep presenting the kicks in the same chapter pattern though, for the sake of the internal logic of the book series, with more or less emphasis on the different subdivisions.

Low Roundhouse Kick to the inside knee – *Shay Levy*

Drill kicks with hands tied in guard:
Low Side kick (left) and High-chambered Front Stomp Kick (right)

A military operation involves deception. Even though you are competent, appear to be incompetent. Though effective, appear to be ineffective.

~ Sun Tzu

1. The Soccer Low Front Kick

Gedan Geri (Karatedo), Coup de pied bas (Savate-Boxe Française), Teng Pai (KungFu), Oblique kick (Jeet Kune Do)

General

This is probably the most common rear-leg Low Kick. Fast, punishingly directed to the shin, it is the kick of choice to gauge your opponent and harass him. But when the opportunity arises, it can become the full-powered kick, not pulled-back rearwards, that can decide a fight's outcome.

It is a very useful stop-kick when directed at a raiding leg, and it can be delivered in a number of ways described later below.

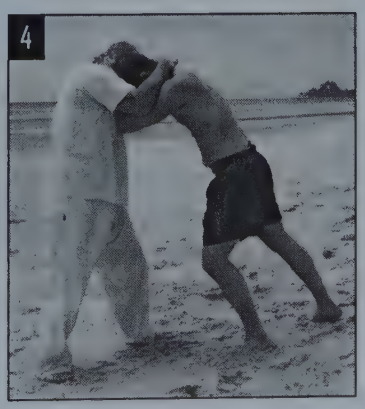
In some karate tournaments, where low-kicking was forbidden, a variation of the kick was shamelessly used to attrite the opponent's legs, under the guise of a failed leg sweep. Similarly, in early Judo tournaments, there was much kicking to the legs in the guise of sweeps in order to "soften" the opponent. Both anecdotes will remind the fighter how efficient and ubiquitous this kick is; and that, if he has to sweep his opponent, he should do so with a kick in mind, just as it was done in old *Ju-Jitsu*!

Old Judo throws were coming from Ju-Jitsu and Chinese Kung Fu and were executed with full-fledged kicks

The Soccer Kick connects with the inner side of the foot, which will be even more painful if you are wearing hard-soled shoes. For bare foot delivery, this gives the added advantage of not having to connect on the hard shin with the ball of the foot: Some people, for fear of hurting their toes, will instinctively kick slower when using the ball of the foot.

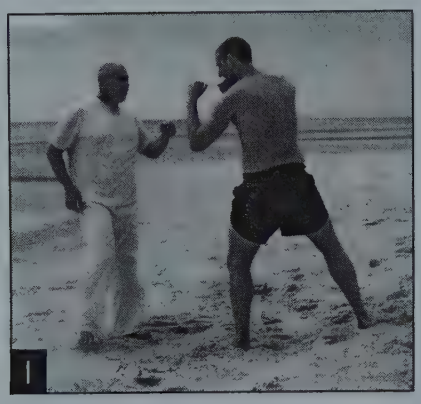
The kick is, of course, a natural kick in clinch position, great to use in between techniques to "soften" the opponent; see photos below for a softening kick to the rear leg in preparation for a knee strike to the ribs on the front side.

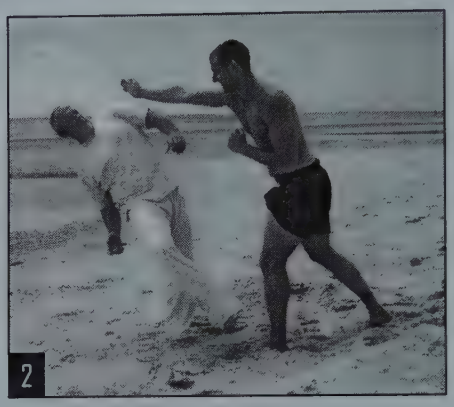
Clinching maneuvers: Soccer kick to the rear shin; then knee to the ribs



The versatile soccer low front kick

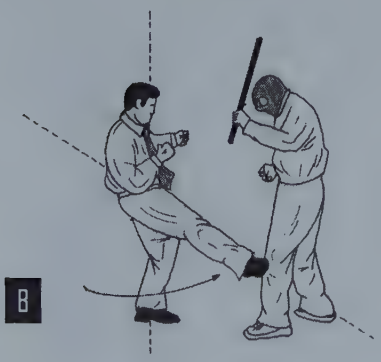
No leaning back and attacking the knee





Kicking while leaning back to evade a slap

Great for self-defense: The leaning-back Soccer Low Front Kick



Great for self-defense: The no-body-leaning Soccer Low Front Kick

Description

The kick is very simply delivered, with no chambering, directly from its rear foot position, in a straight line towards the target, usually the mid-shin. The impact is with the inner side of the foot, just like for a kick on the soccer ball.

Figure A (left) shows the classic delivery of the kick, with the upper body leaning proportionally back when kicking. The amount of leaning back is, in fact, up to you and the circumstances, giving the added advantage of taking you away from an eventual stop-jab or counter to the head. But in any case, it is important to minimize telegraphing: The body does not move (and start leaning backwards) *before* the kicking foot has overtaken the front foot. I personally advocate no leaning at all (See Figure B at left): just kick and either: lower the leg back rearwards (fast), or lower it forwards and follow up.

In *Savate-Boxe Française*, the kick is delivered slightly differently for extra power. The distinction is as much a mental one than a physical one; very much like training for flying kicks while imagining an invisible step to climb on. The *Savate* kick, which in their way of competing is very much a bread-and-butter kick, is based on sending the hip forwards first, while the foot is stuck at the level of the front leg. This creates physically, but also in the fighter's mind, an accumulating reserve of energy, like a coiled spring. The foot is then suddenly

released in a burst of forward power. See the illustration at left. In *Savate*, the body generally leans back to keep your head out of harm's way.

Savate's typical coiling of the "*coup de pied bas*"

The classic kicks described have the kicking foot chambering back rearwards. We will now describe variations in which the kicking foot lands forward. And what better forward landing is there than square on your opponent's foot? Landing on your opponent's foot not only hurts, but also immobilizes him while getting his attention away from other attacks. The illustrations at right show such a kick, with the additional illustration of a good use of the extra-backwards-leaning. You lean forward to provoke your opponent into a jab that you will evade by leaning backwards *while kicking him*. Your upper body movements will make him totally blind to the incoming kick. You do not recoil the kick back, but land on the foot of his kicked leg. Your foot is naturally turned outwards and stays on his. You control his front hand while circular-elbowing him in the head (*Mawashi Empi Uchi- Karatedo*). If you now push him back, he'll fall easily while seriously hurting his ankle.

Evade high punch while kicking; stomp and follow up

The low Soccer Front Kick can often be followed by Stomp & Push

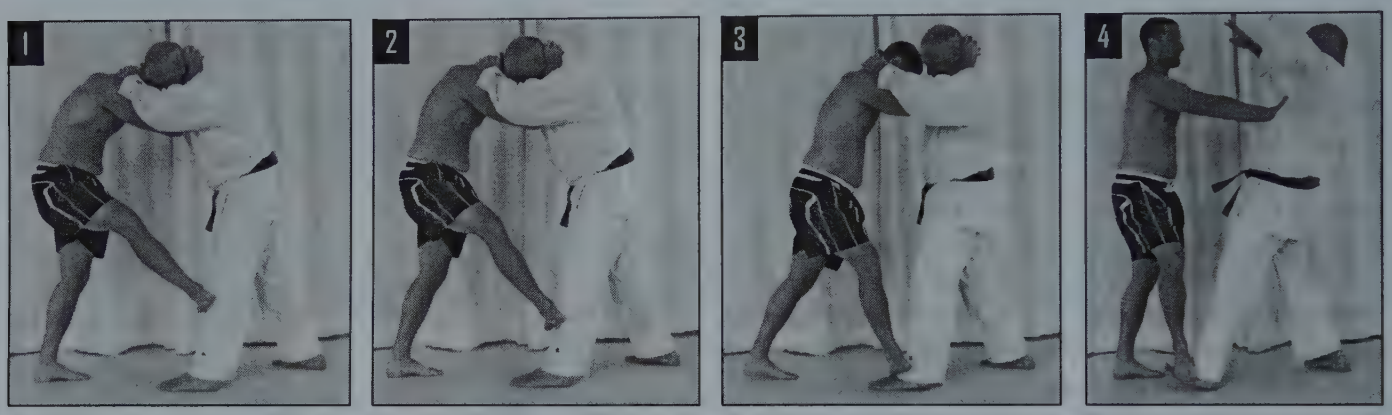
Another variation of the forward landing is the *Scrape & Stomp*. This is not a stomp kick (presented further on in this book), but a forward kick, which, after connecting keeps contact with the shin while painfully scraping down, until the kicking foot lands on your opponent's foot. The photos below show the Scrape & Stomp landing after a soccer low front kick in the clinching position. Remember that clinching is an immediate "must-low-kick" position, and in the case of the soccer front kick, it is coming from the rear leg for power. After scraping his shin and landing on his foot, you can push him backwards for a nasty fall. Remember: *As soon as* you get in a clinch, low-kick, lest you'll be painfully kicked first!

Key points

- Keep you guard up as you are close.
- Minimize upper body movements for "no tell-tales" delivery.
- Always chamber back fast: after you connect and kick "through" the shin, retract the leg backwards or land fast and forcefully forwards.

Targets

Shins, ankles, knees and thighs; all low targets from all sides.

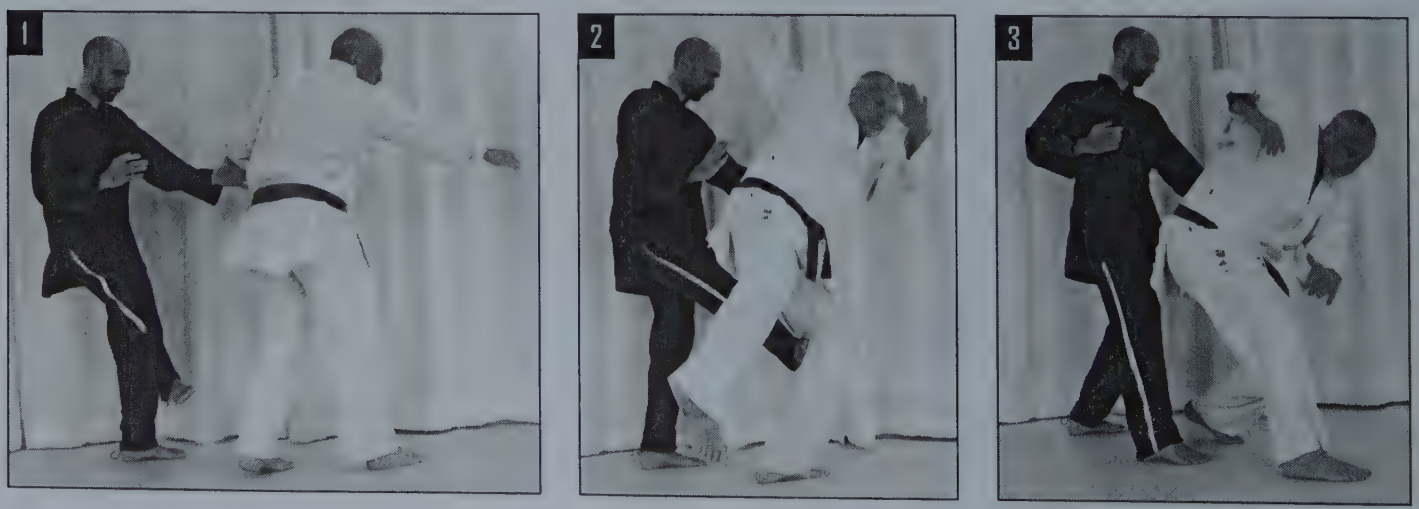


Clinch, Low-kick, Scrape, Stomp, Push

Typical application

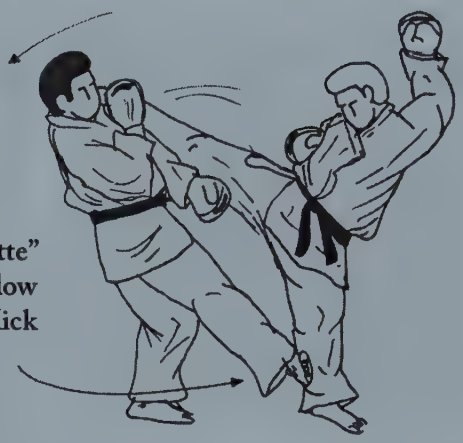
A few typical applications have already been described, like the "feint-forward and evade-back" or the clinch. Another typical use of this kick is as a "cutting" kick: A timing attack to the standing leg of a kicker, generally a high kicker.

The series below shows how the kick is used on the calf (or thigh) of a spin-back-kicking opponent, stopping him in mid-spin with his back open for a reverse punch to the kidney and a subsequent back-of-the-knee stomp.



The low kick as a stop-kick against a Spin-back Hook Kick

The illustration at right shows a typical *Savate* technique in which a high roundhouse is absorbed in the gloved hand and/or the shoulder, while you simultaneously "cut" the standing leg while strongly leaning back. Follow-up with a fast jab! The form depicted in the illustration is highly typical of *Savate*, a great historical French Martial Art with Oriental roots.

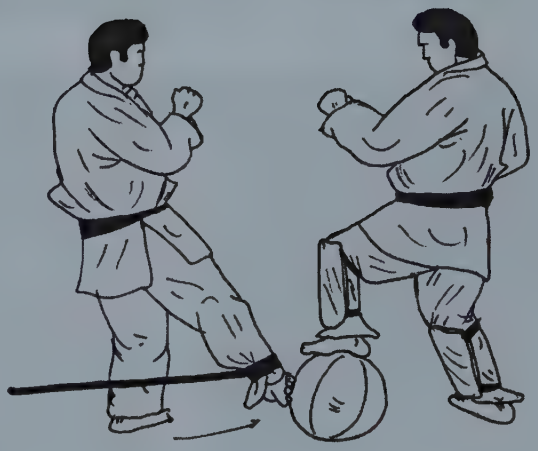


Typical Savate "Fouette" (Roundhouse) cut by a low Soccer Kick

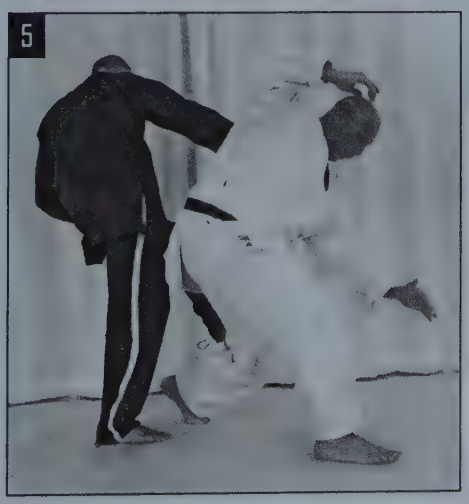
Specific training

The few examples added here will generally be valid for most of the other Low Kicks coming in the book:

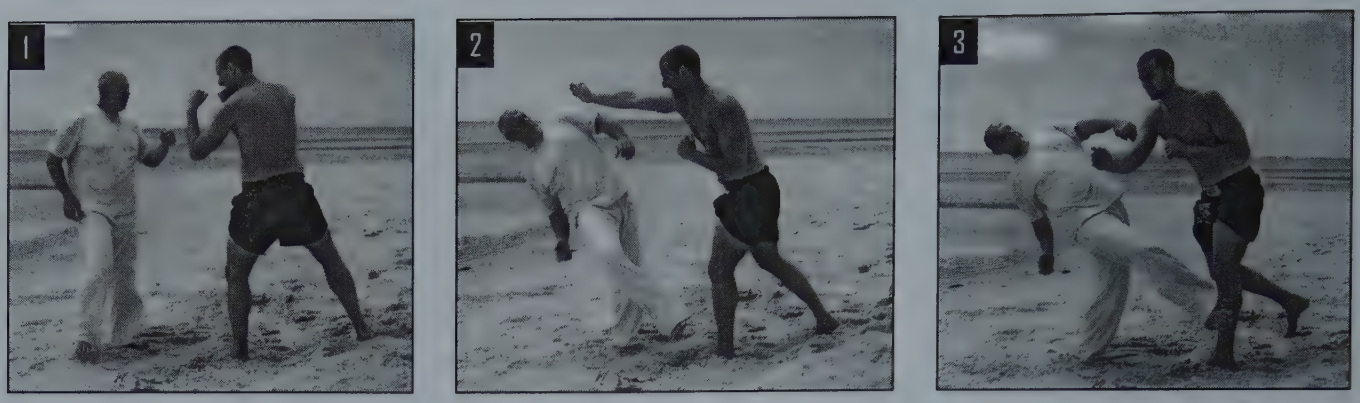
- As mentioned in the introduction: drill against a tire, a lying heavy bag, a standing heavy bag, or a medicine ball. The Medicine Ball can be held in place under the foot of a partner for better visualization.
- You can drill for power with an elastic band tied to the ankle. After 10 repetitions, release the band and deliver 10 more kicks to a bag with full unhindered power. Then drill the other leg, with the band first.
- Do not forget the all-important partner sparring with shin guards. Take turns to deliver the kick while trying to go as fast as possible while not telegraphing it. Your partner will try to evade if he sees the kick coming.



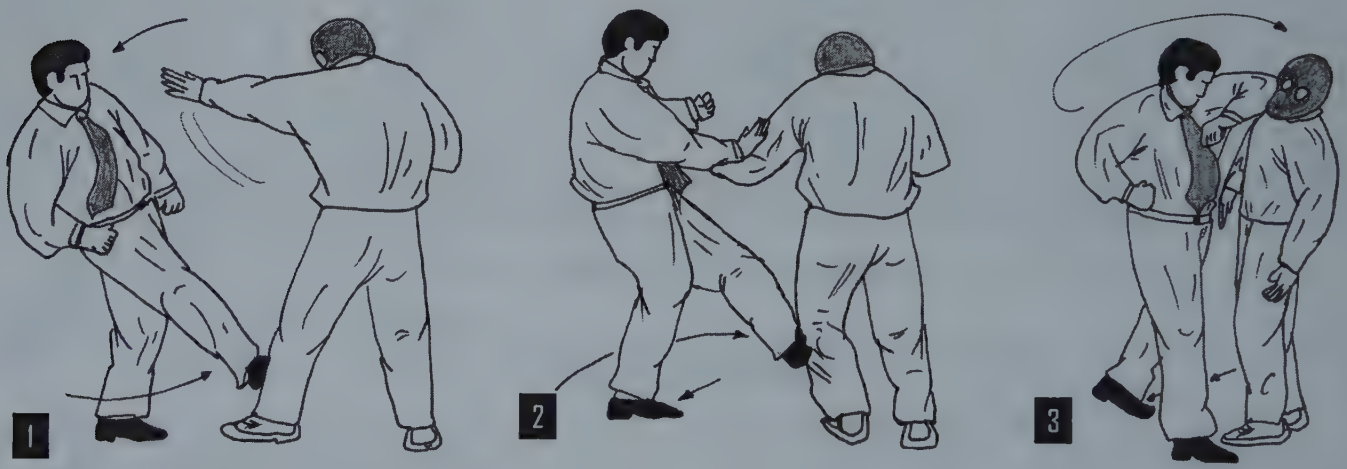
An illustration combining several training aids: Medicine Ball, elastic band, shin guards



Self defense

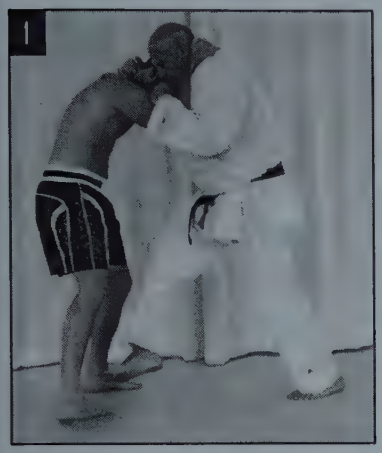


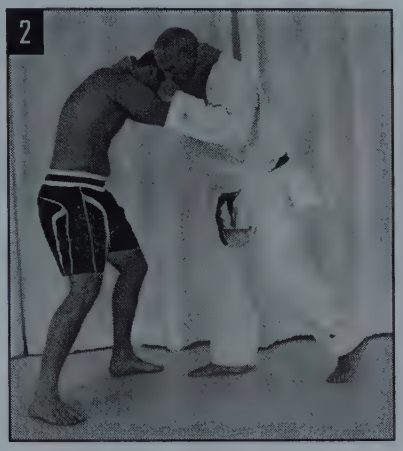
The sequences above and below show a typical use of the back-leaning while kicking in a self-defense situation. As an aggressor attempts to slap you in the face, you lean back to evade the slap while low-kicking him. You can then lower the leg while keeping control of his slapping arm, and immediately kick him again with the other foot. You can follow-up with a full-hipped circular elbow strike, and then more...

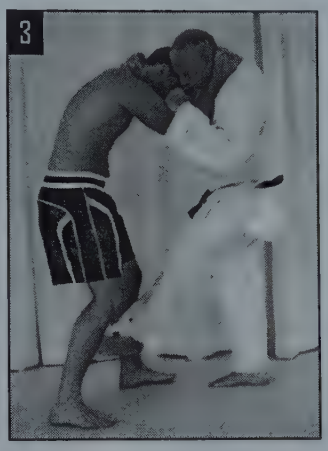


Double Soccer low Kick after back-leaning evasion

The sequence below shows the use of the kick to the very sensitive *inside* shin in a clinch position from which you have to act fast. The inside shin is full of nerve ends and very sensitive. Soccer-front kick his inside shin, then switch legs and kick the other inside shin. Use the fact that you have so "opened" his legs for a shin-kick to the groin. Bend the leg and follow up with a side-knee strike to the ribs, tilt the foot as you come down with a foot stomp. Push him down and away and follow up.

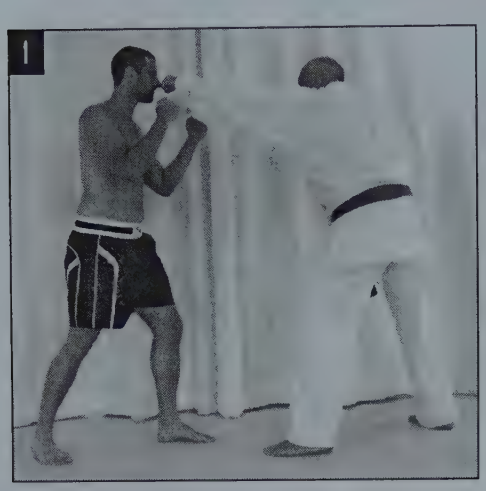


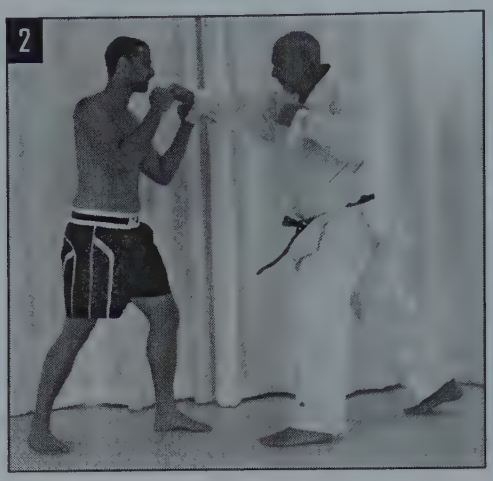




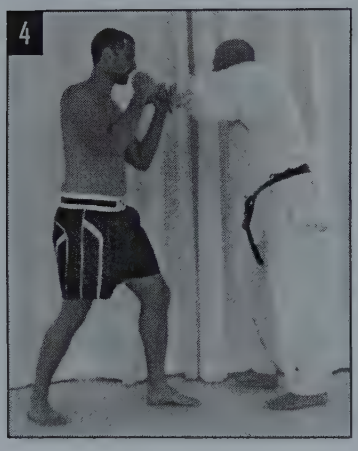
Another clinching combination; the inside shin is a very sensitive target

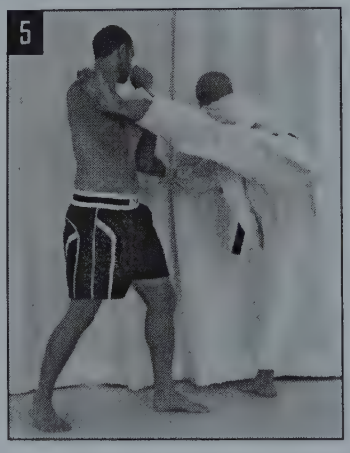
The photos below show an aggressive combination based on the alternating of high and low attacks, as well as inside/outside angles. You confront your assailant and take the initiative with a *high* lunge/reverse punch, covering up the delivery of a painful soccer *low* front kick. You lower the kicking leg forward to deliver a full rear-leg *high* roundhouse kick. Keep his front hand busy by attacking his face while lowering the Roundhouse-kicking leg forward. Keep control of his front arm while delivering another *low* Front Kick, eventually to his rear leg this time. In any case, do not stop your flow of attacks, preferably alternating high and low.



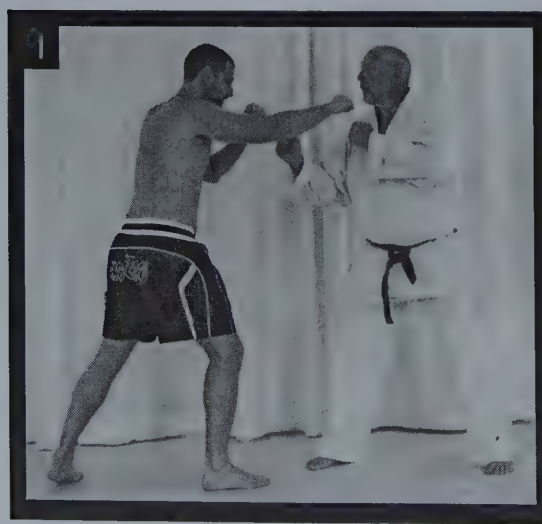


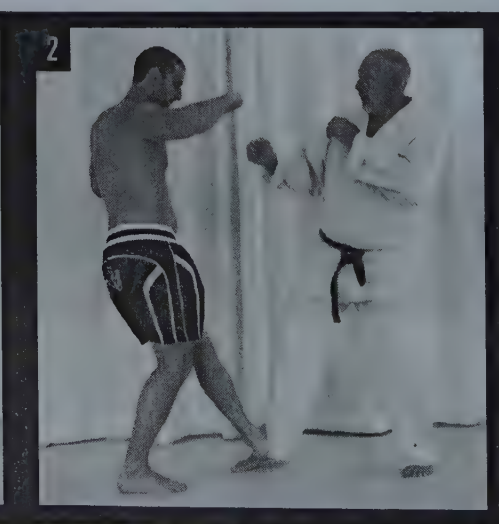
Alternate low and high attacks to confuse and hurt the opponent

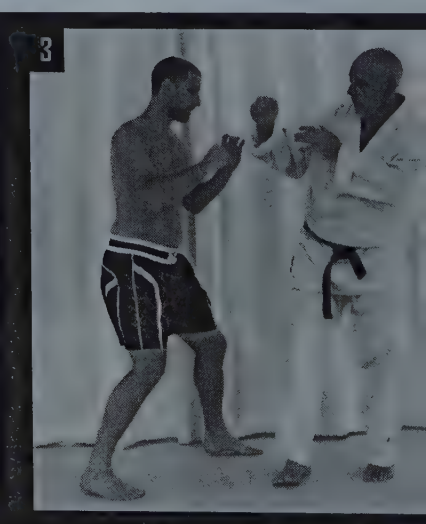




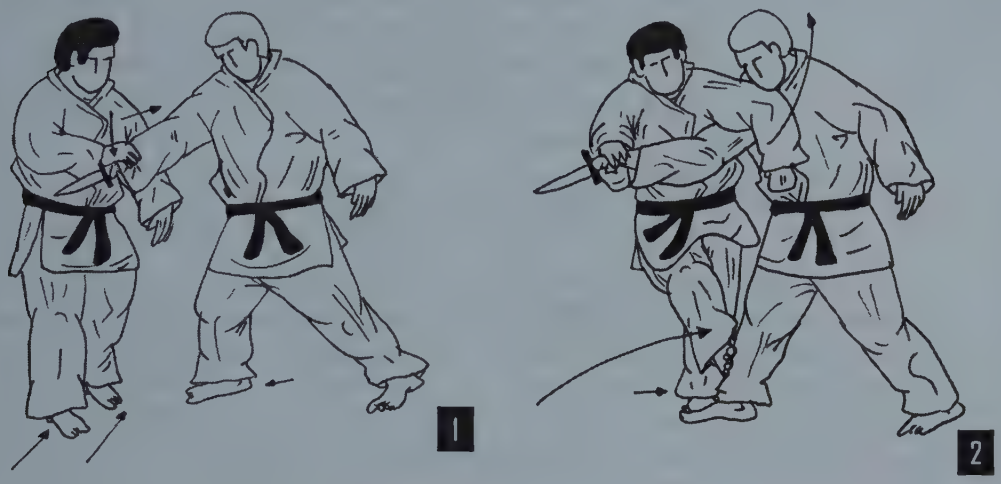
There are, of course, an infinite number of variations of this basic combination. The sequence below shows the same combo, but with a simple jab to start and a *rebounding* leg from high Roundhouse to low Soccer Front Kick. It is a purer version of the simple, but so efficient, hi/lo/hi/lo principle.







The figures below show the use of the kick as a "helper" for the success of an arm-lock against a knife attack. As you have succeeded in evading a direct knife attack to the body and controlling the knife arm, you pull it strongly to hyperextend while hitting the elbow. Deliver a Soccer Front Kick to his forward leg as a "softener" while you envelop his arm from above, eventually elbowing his chin on the way. Your low kick turns into a stomp on the forward foot (This application requires some chambering) while completing the arm-lock. The stomping foot stays on the attacker's while you disarm him by seriously jerking his elbow. You can follow up by throwing him over your leg while elbowing him in the face, in a classic takedown.

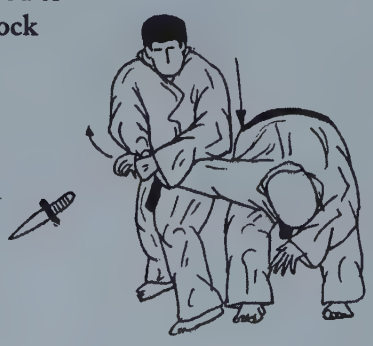


The Low Soccer Kick as a "softening" maneuver to achieve a lock

Two Soccer low Front Kicks in a simple but very efficient combination attack

The sequence below shows another way to go after evading the same attack in the same way. The "softening" principle we are trying to illustrate stays the same. This time, you pull his arm while getting control of his elbow with the other hand; all the while you deliver a regular (front-leg) low Front Kick to his front knee. You lower the leg, keep pulling, and deliver a Soccer Front Kick with your other (rear) leg to the same knee, getting into arm-lock position. Disarm him by jerking and push him to the floor.

Low kicks helping you to set up your arm-lock



Another great use of this kick in self-defense is against attempts to grab you at the lapels, shoulders or even throat. The illustrations that follow show how you retreat to put your assailant off-balance, while getting control of his arms. This is done in the Ju-jitsu or Aikido spirit of letting him rushing an open door. Your "retreating" leg rebounds on the floor to come back to his forward leg in a Soccer Front Kick. In this position, you can follow-up by throwing him with a classic ankle block (*Sasae Tsuri Komi Ashi – Judo*); the low kick is then part of the throw, the way in was done in traditional *Ju Jitsu:* Kick, not sweep!

The Low Soccer Kick in a Judo throw

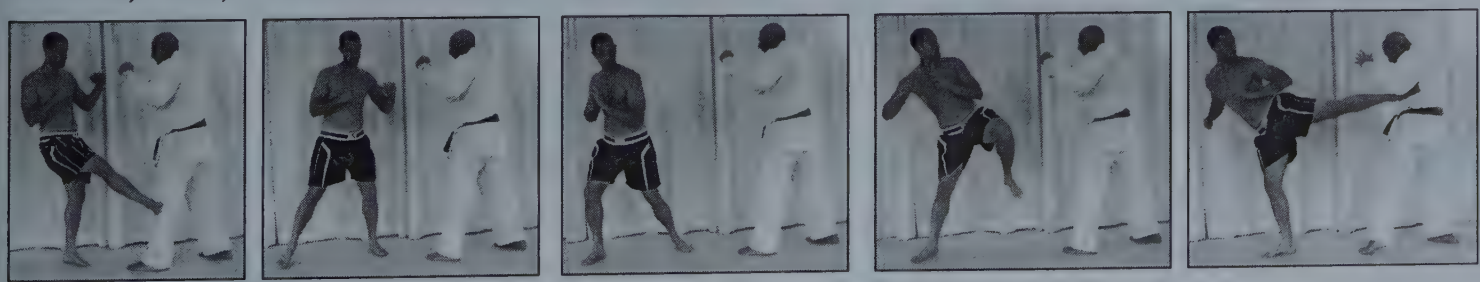
A low Soccer Kick will help you soften your opponent for a grab release

If your assailant has already grabbed you and your rearwards move does not put him off-balance, hit both his forearms from above with hammer-fist or knife-hand downward strikes, while delivering a fully powered Soccer Front Kick to his shin/knee, as shown above. Follow up with a knee strike to the groin or ribs, while keeping control of both his arms; no need to lower the foot in-between. You can then deliver a circular elbow strike to his head. A natural follow-up would be a neck-holding hip wheel throw to send him to the floor (*Koshi Guruma – Judo*).

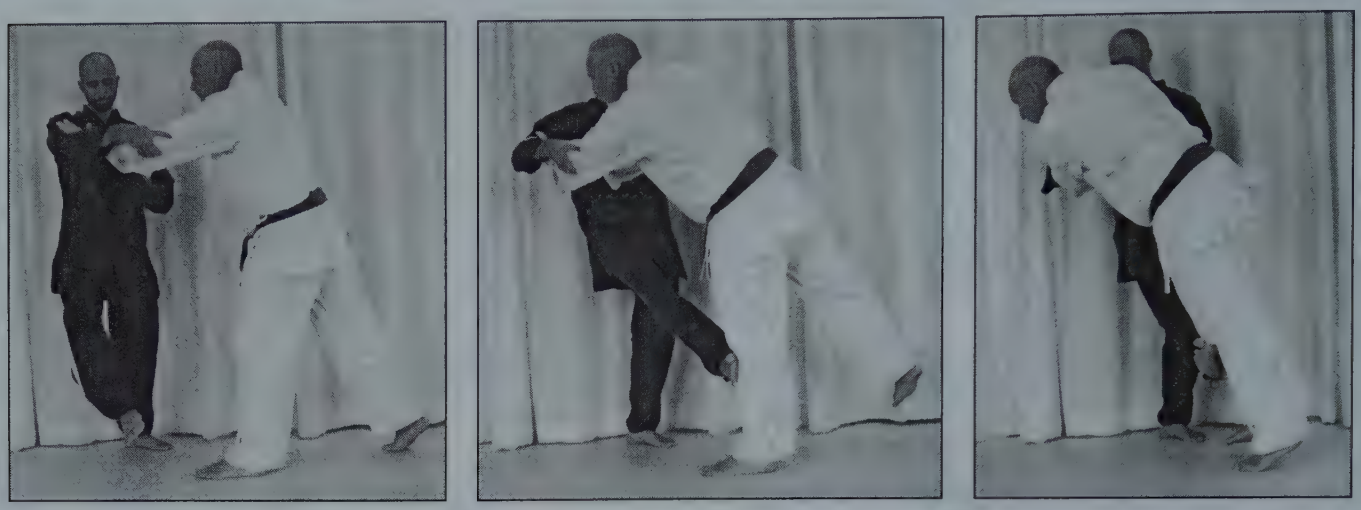
It is already clear to the reader that this kick is really an all-purpose weapon for self-defense situations. It should be used automatically in any situation where you are surprised. The figures below show how to kick while leaning back and blocking or smothering a surprising fist attack. The kicking leg is lowered back in a big step to get you away from the assailant while turning back to stop him with a short back kick to the ribs. Under the same principle, you can deliver an annoying low kick, look like you are moving away but come back with a side kick as illustrated by the photos below.

Kick, retreat, surprise Back Kick

Low-kick; retreat; come back with Side Kick



The photos below show, again, an application coming from the older *Judo*, when it was still close to its realistic *Ju-Jitsu* ancestor. The low kick is used to block the knee of an assailant, resulting in a throw.



The kicking version of old Judo's *Hiza guruma*

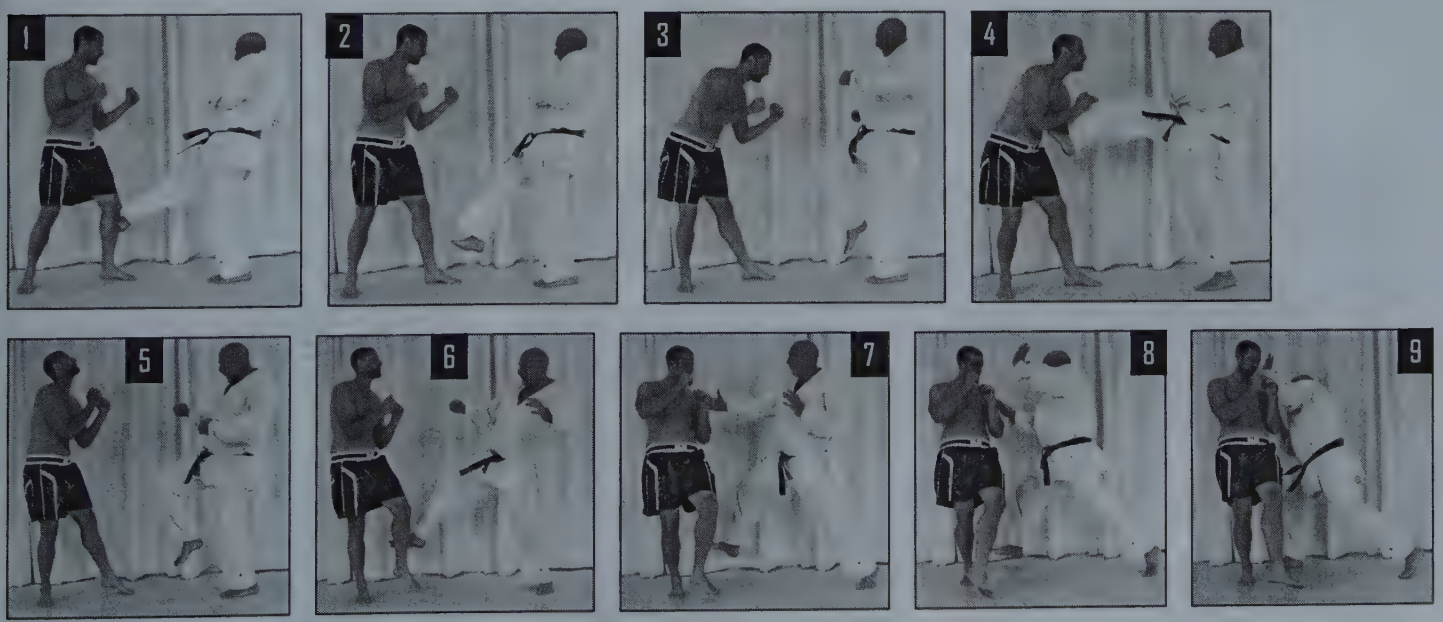
It is similar to the milder *Hiza Guruma* throw of contemporary Judo, but with a full kick and a side throw. The photos below show an application of this technique: As your assailant throws himself into a front-leg Roundhouse or knee attack, you evade *forward* to the inside, grab him and kick his standing knee or shin while pulling him down.

***Hiza-Guruma*-type kick while rolling inside a Roundhouse Kick**

The illustrations below show another use of the kick as a "help" to takedown and lock an opponent. This is not a sweep but a real kick to the shin to hurt the assailant, place him more off-balance and "help" his standing leg into the "right" direction. As your assailant kicks you, you block and scoop his leg on the inside, and then deliver the Soccer low Front Kick to his standing leg while lifting and circling his knee. Once he is on the ground, you join hands to start a hip-lock maneuver. Kick him in the groin while stepping over his leg. Keep pivoting (You can even stomp his head or spine while passing the leg over his body). Lock his hip very carefully in training; this is a very dangerous lock.

The low Soccer Front Kick will help you set up the takedown and lock with less resistance

And we can cap this section with an example of an overall versatile simple offensive combination, presented below. You start with a low Soccer Front Kick to your opponent's front shin and let your foot rebound from his shin into a regular full Front Kick chamber. You deliver—from this chamber—a classic Essential penetrating Front Kick to his groin, ribs or solar plexus; just to be clear: without lowering the foot back to the floor! You chamber back and—again without lowering your foot— sweep his now-weakened front leg from the outside. Follow up with a high hand attack, like a palm strike. This whole combination works well because it is fast and nimble, because the sweep attacks a leg the opponent will be naturally releasing from body weight, and because the follow-up comes as you are on his blind side. In the case of a self-defense situation, the front kick becomes a fast *Upward groin Kick* that blends naturally with the preceding low kick. The low kick, by the way, could be also a natural classic Front low Kick, *as presented in the next section.*



A fast and effective "no-foot-down" combination

2. The Front Low Kick

Teep Robgaun (Muay Thai), Gedan Mae Geri (Karatedo)

General

This is simply the low version of the Essential basic penetrating Front Kick. Some chambering is needed for this kick to be effective, but,—as already explained in the introduction—the amount of chambering is up to you and the situation. This is a very fast kick, and very efficient in self-defense situations, especially if you have hard soled shoes on. Hitting a shin or knee with the hard tip of a shoe is extremely painful. If barefoot, you will hit with the ball or the plant of the foot, like for the regular (higher) Front Kick.

The kick is very useful as a stop kick, as will be illustrated further on (See below left). It can also be useful as a hard take-down (See below center)

This kick is generally a rear-leg kick; but it can also be delivered with the front leg, especially in stop-kick variations, as will be shown in the applications.

It is, again, a natural kick for very close combat situations like the clinch (See below right).

Description and variations

The illustration that follows shows the classic delivery: you lift the knee *to the point where the natural extension of the leg will bring the ball of the foot to target.* Some chambering is needed for this kick, but do not overtake this maximum. This is clearly shown in the illustration, and the reader is invited to compare it to Photo 4 on page 43 , with the same kick, but delivered to *groin* level.

Chamber knee just as necessary, not more

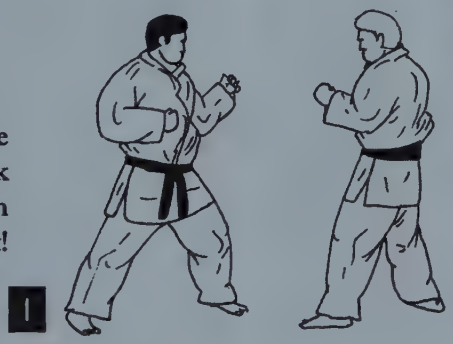
The Front Low Kick is great as a stop-kick

Low Front Kick as a take-down

Low Front Kick to the rear shin in a clinch

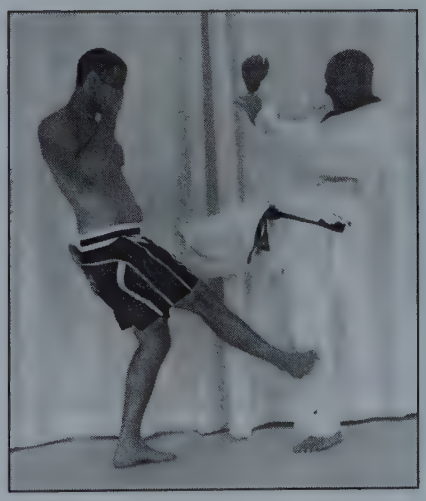
A typical application of the kick—and one that should be practiced even if only as a speed, flexibility and chambering drill—is presented below. It is a simple variation of the combo presented in the previous section, in which the Soccer low Front Kick is now replaced by a regular Low front Kick. The low kick, whether soccer- or regular-, is a feint and a painful distraction, as the foot "rebounds" on the shin to turn into a second penetrating Front Kick to the body. In this example: As your opponent jabs, you lean back while controlling his hand and delivering the Low Front Kick to his forward shin. You immediately chamber back and, *without lowering your foot*, deliver a penetrating Front Kick to his exposed ribs. (This is a double kick to be drilled a lot even if only for general speed and kicking excellence). You can follow up by hitting his face with a palm strike, while landing and keeping control of his arm. You can then sweep him.

A versatile double kick starting with the Low Front!



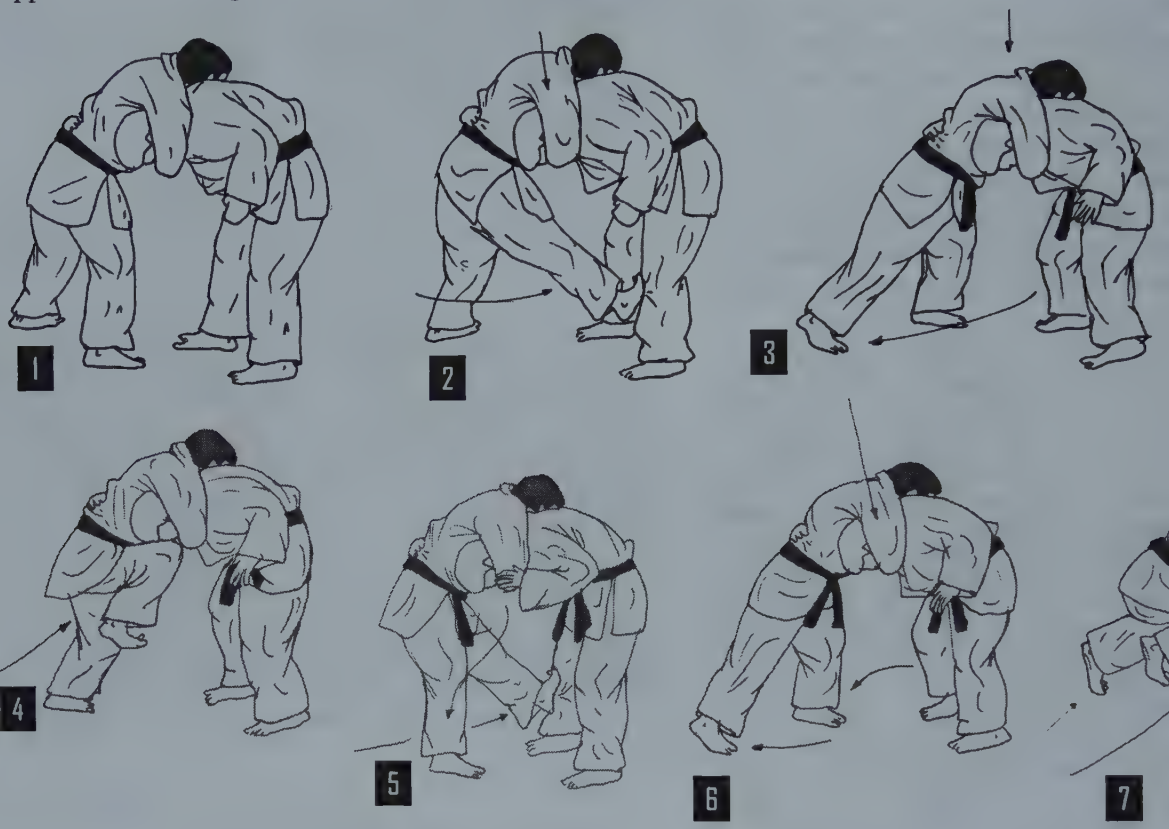
Of course, like the previous kick, the Low Front Kick can be used as a "cutting" kick. Photos 1-4 below show such a kick after you have blocked and taken control of his front kick. Obviously, the principle is identical to that of the previous and related *Soccer Low Front Kick* (See the photo at bottom).

Block the kick and low-kick the shin of the standing leg



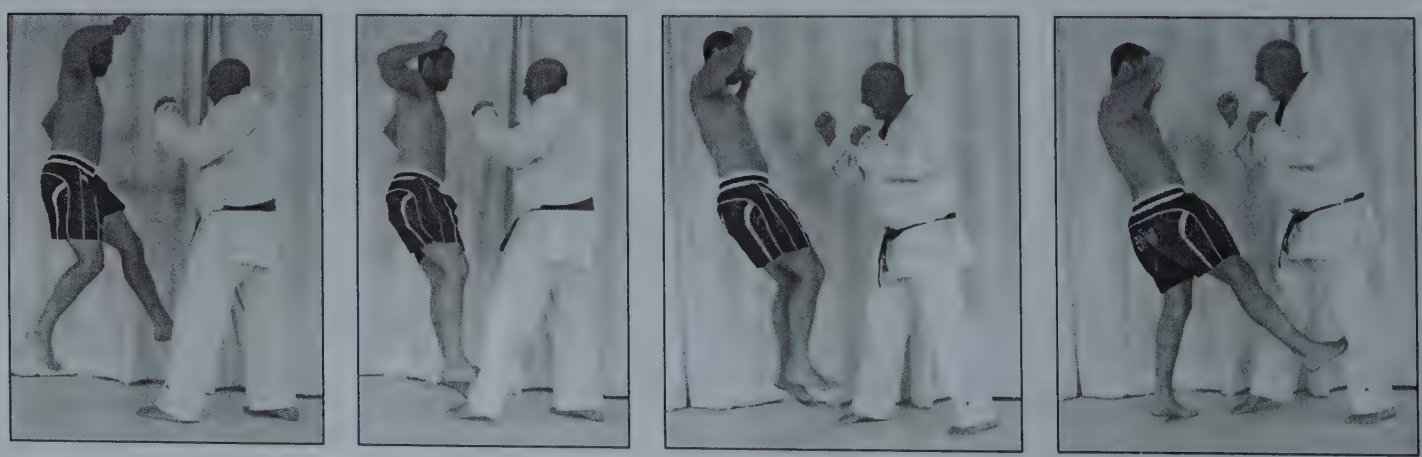
The technique is nearly identical to the Soccer low Front Kick version

The figures below show the use of the kick in a devastatingly aggressive combination against an opponent that you already control in a front headlock (*Guillotine*). This may seem overly crude to some artists, but is the bread-and-butter of MMA fights. As soon as you have taken control of your opponent in the headlock, you deliver a first Low Front Kick to his shin, causing him to pull back his leg and hips. You plant back your kicking foot far rearwards, in order to have room and momentum for a knee strike to his immobilized head. You immediately deliver a Low Front Kick to his other shin, keeping a tight headlock, and then a surprising flying knee strike! Keep at it until he surrenders. This could be considered a peculiar lo/hi/lo/hi combination, and, in any case, will do a lot to sap your opponent's will to fight back.



In Guillotine hold, alternate knee strikes and Low Front Kicks

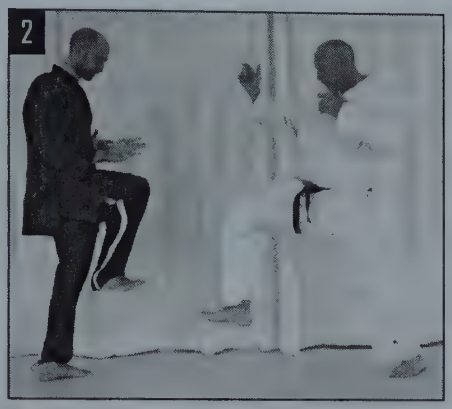
The photos below show a fantastic little one-two close-combat combination and a must-practice drill: Kick his front shin, and then hop to switch legs fast and airborne in order to hit his second shin with your other leg. Follow up. As a drill, it is great for speed and has a serious Plyometric basis.



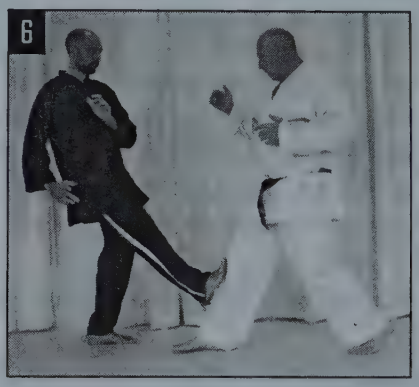
One/Two: switch legs airborne for a fast double low kick

The combination works regardless of which leg is forward

Another interesting use for this kick is counter-attacking, as mentioned in the introduction. The sequence below shows how you retreat just enough to evade a body front kick, and then kick the shin of his landing leg. You can connect with the ball of the foot (Photo 3), or—in a more stomping move—with the whole plant of the foot (Photo 6). You can then follow up, for example with a high Roundhouse from your other leg.



Evade back and kick the shin of the landing leg; connect with ball or plant of the foot



An interesting variation of this kick is the low version of the Essential Outward-tilted Front Kick. This allows you to attack the inside of his front knee, but with the same principles of *low chambering* and *fast kicking*. See photo at right.

The regular basic Outward-tilted Front Kick is illustrated at the end of the section, for information.

The low Outward-tilted Front Kick

Low Front Kick to the rear thigh of the opponent

Targets

Shins, knee, thighs (left) and groin. Upper body if you opponent is bent-over or kneeling, as illustrated in the Self-defense section below.

An important variation of this kick, which we could have presented separately (but did not), is an *inside thigh* kick connecting with the *shin*. This technique is excellent when you get close to your opponent, whether on purpose by footwork or randomly as the fight takes you there. The illustrations below show how you step aside while getting control of the back of his neck and pull him both downwards and forwards. Kick the inside of his rear thigh with your shin and then forcefully chamber back while pivoting. You can follow up by pulling him to the ground while pushing on the back of his neck, or, as illustrated, roundhouse-kick him in the face.

Low Front Shin Kick to the inside thigh

The sequence below will show a *self-defense* application of this kick variation, aiming for the *groin* this time, in the dire situation where you have a gun held in your back. If the gun touches your back and there is no danger of a stray bullet hurting innocent people while you deflect it, you can pivot in place and sweep the gun out of range, encircling the armed hand and delivering a circular elbow strike to the head. The shin-groin kick flows naturally into the movement and you can then catch the barrel of the gun, release his grip while breaking his trigger finger, and hit him in the head with the gun itself, in a classic *Krav Maga* series.

In a self-defense situation, go straight for the groin

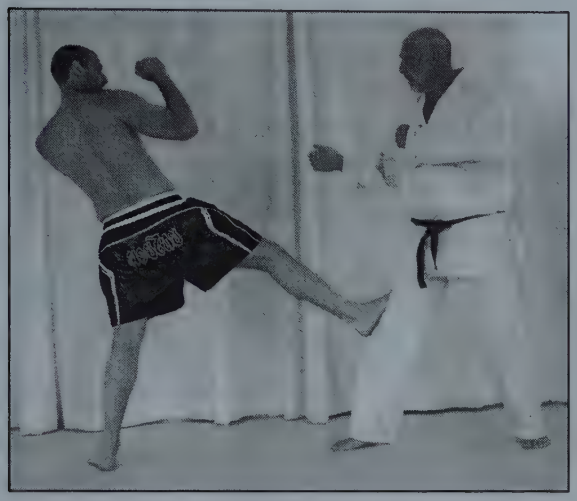
Key points

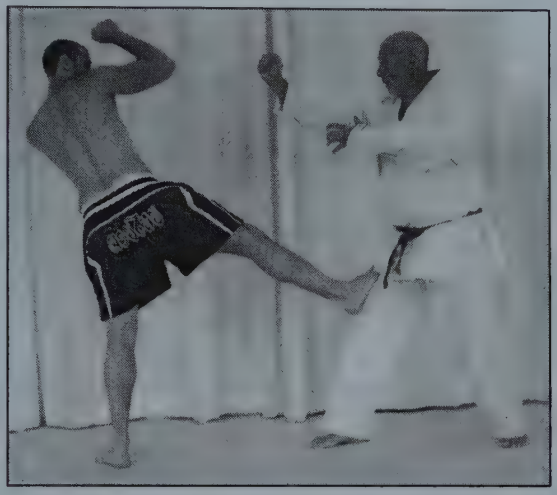
- Keep your guard up.
- Always chamber to some extent, this is a front kick.
- Always recoil forcefully, whatever the follow-up.

Typical applications

On top of the applications presented in the kick description, we should also mention the *front-leg version* of the kick.

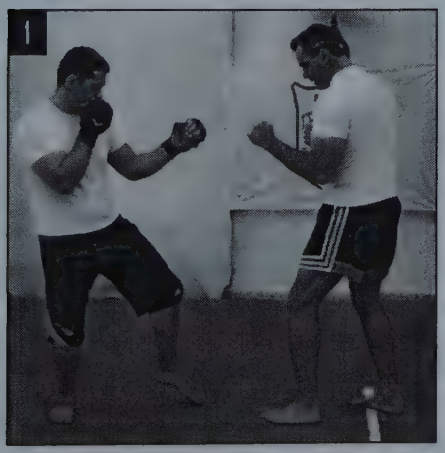
Stop-low kicks are usually better delivered as fast front-leg kicks. The photos below describe what could be more aptly named as an obstruction kick. It is a more "pushing" version of the kick, used to stop the beginning of a move by your opponent, regardless of its type: footwork, kick, punch. By delivering the kick above the knee you stop any forward movement. You can follow up by immediately jabbing, and then kick. This very useful kick is very much used by *Muay-Thai* fighters—also at mid-section level—and called a "*Teep*" Kick.

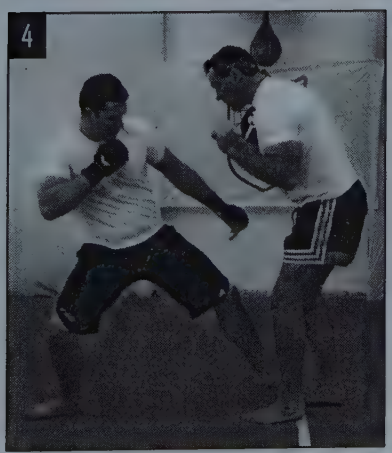




Obstruction kick; just above the knee or a bit higher

The photos below show an application of the front-leg obstruction version of the kick: As your opponent shows signs of initiating an attack, kick/push into his front thigh to stop him. Follow up with a two-leg tackle, for example.





Teep kick to the front leg as a preparation for a legs shoot

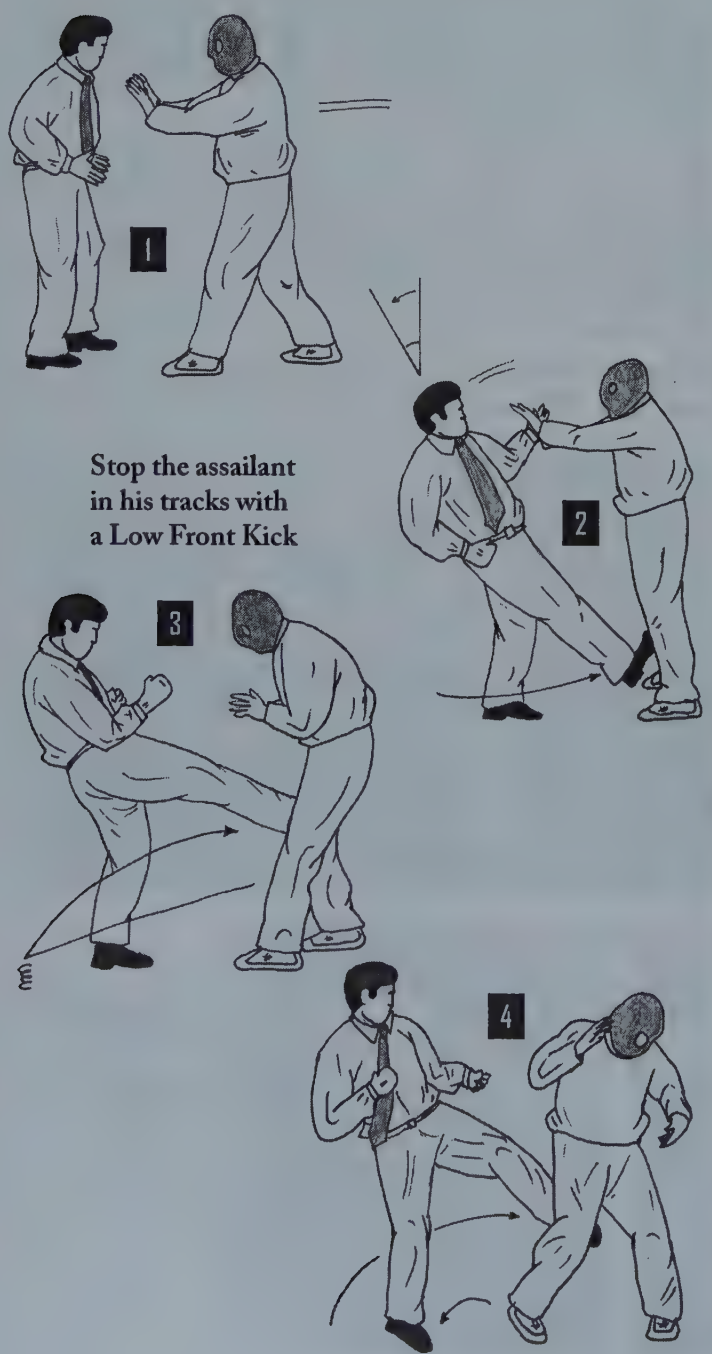
Specific training

Among all the drills already mentioned, you should specifically train the stop-kick version of the kick and the "double" front kick version.

Note that the Front Low Kick should be sometimes drilled with shoes on!

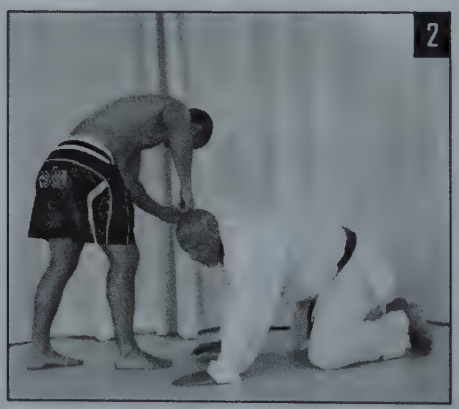
Self defense

The figures below show the use of the kick against an assailant attempting to choke you. Lean back while front-kicking his shin and immediately follow up with a groin kick and low straight-leg Roundhouse.

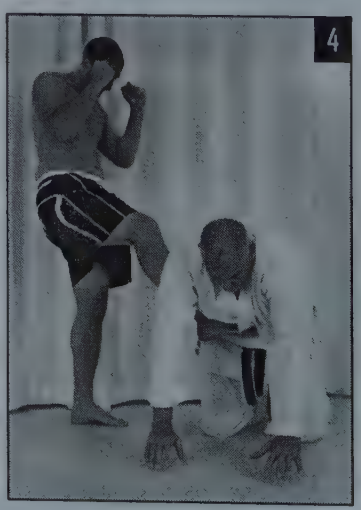


Stop the assailant in his tracks with a Low Front Kick

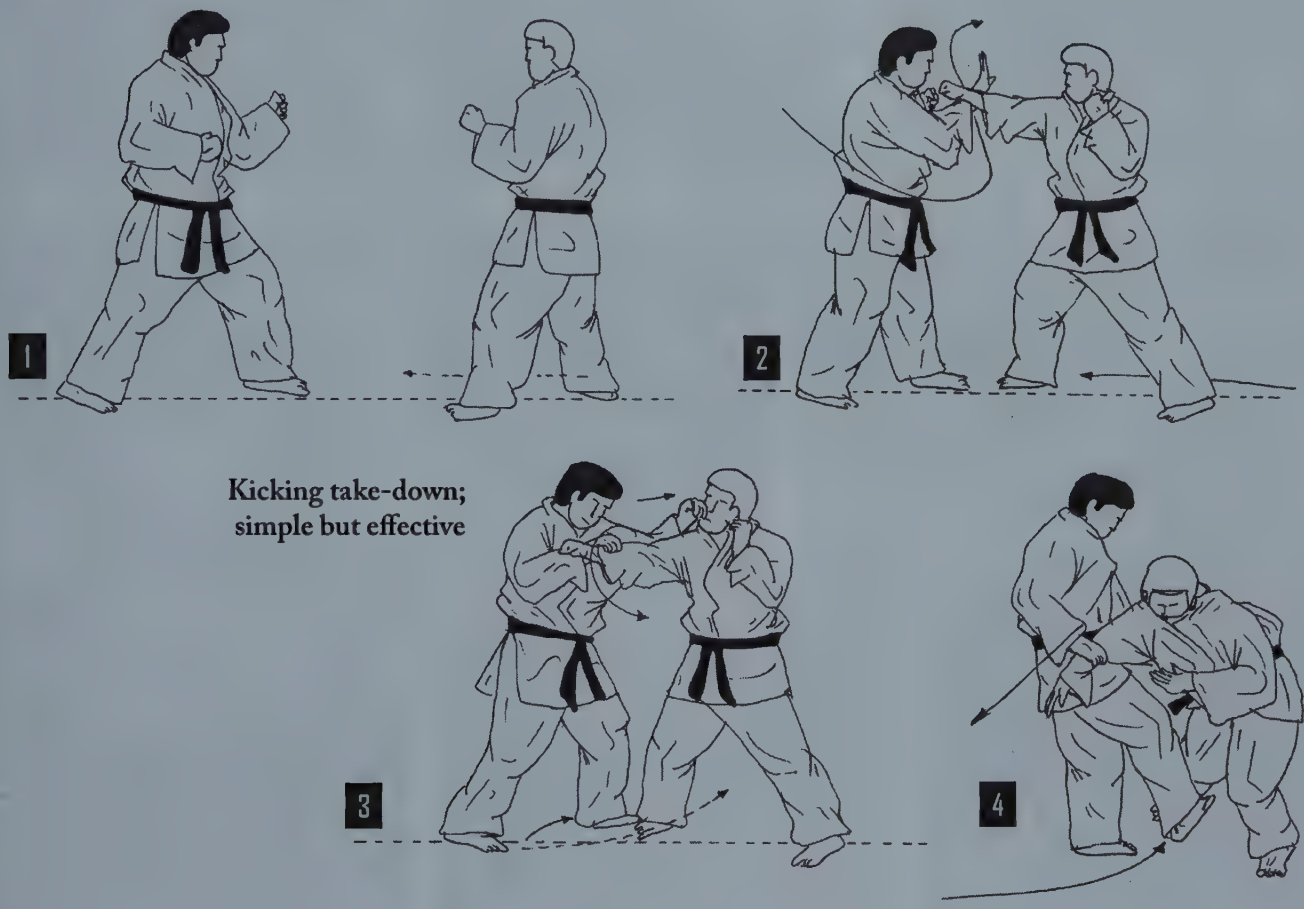
The photos below show the use of the kick on an opponent you have thrown to the ground or forced to kneel. This does not look very fair-play, but is totally legitimate in a self-defense situation or in a MMA match where the rules allow for it. Targets to aim for are the face, the front shoulders and the ribs. (In these cases, you can also connect with the top of the foot).



Kicking a downed opponent in the ribs

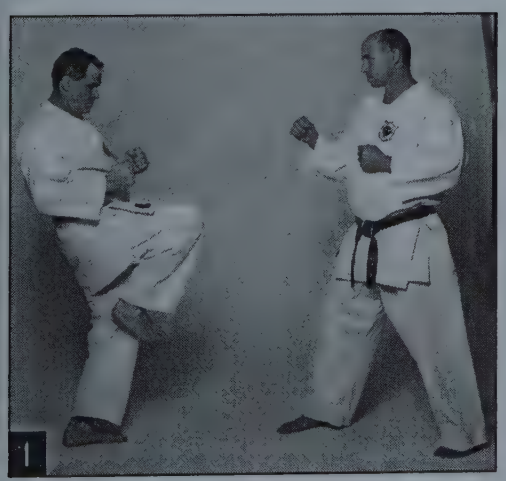


To conclude, we are giving an example of a kicking take-down using the low front kick. Again, this technique could be a milder sweep, but, in our case, it is a *fully-powered kick* with the side effect of throwing the opponent to the ground. The kick could also be a low Soccer Front Kick, but in this specific application, it is a regular Low Front Kick and contact is made with the ankle when kicking. The figures that follow show clearly the reverse catching block against a full-stepped lunge punch. Strike his face while pulling his caught arm forward and repositioning yourself to his closer outside. Kick *through* his front ankle towards his rear out-side while pulling his body forward to his inside. He will fall on his face with a bruised lower leg.

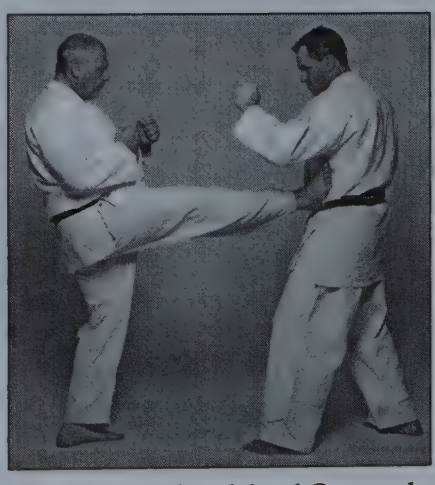


Kicking take-down; simple but effective

Illustrative photos



The Essential mid-level Penetrating Front Kick



The Essential mid-level Outward-tilted Front Kick

3. The Groin Front Kick

Kin Geri (Karatedo)

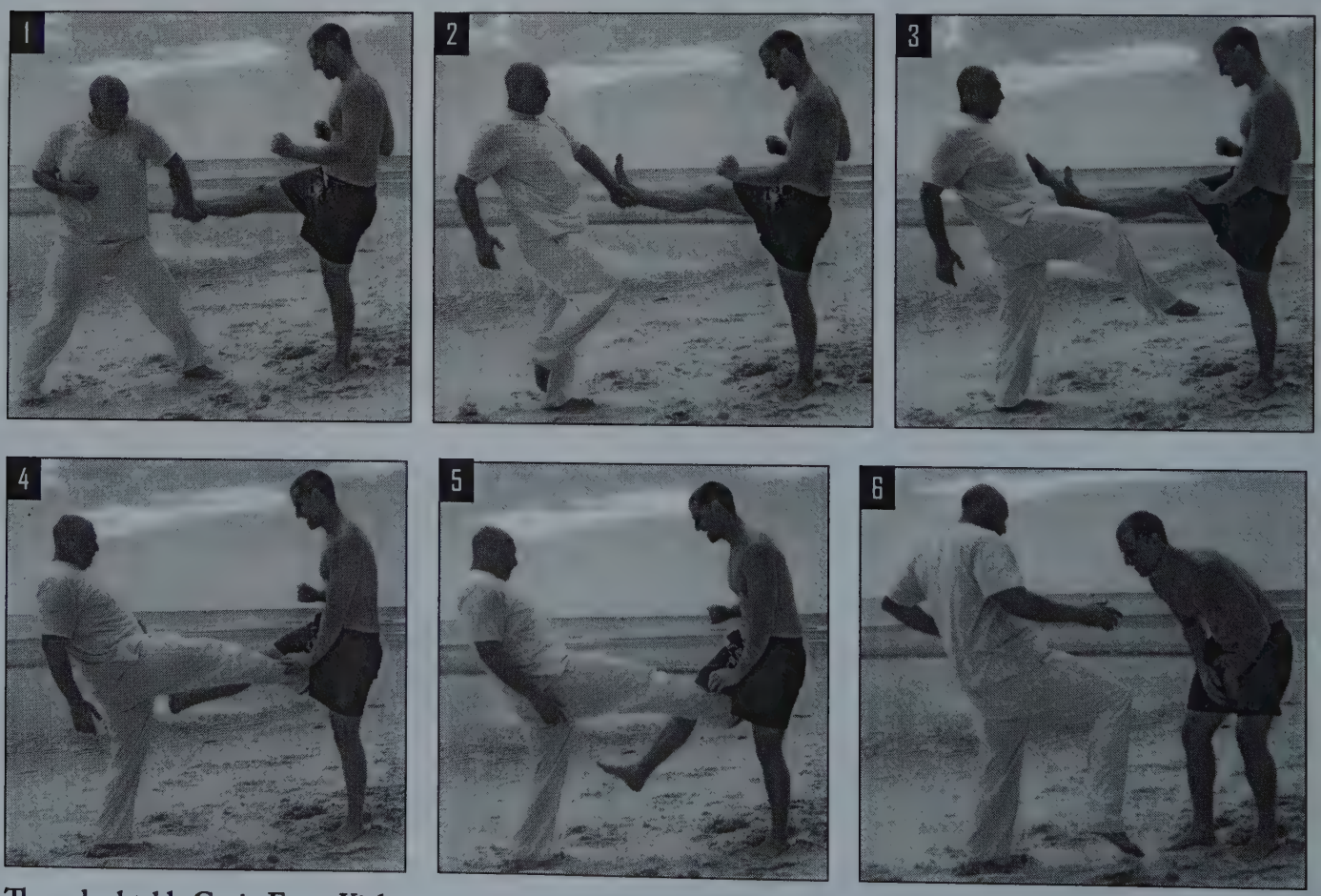
General

The *Upward Front Kick* and the *Straight-leg Upward Front Kick* are basic Essential Kicks, presented in previous work. We present here the exclusive *groin kick* emphasis for these kicks because of their central use in realistic fighting and self-defense situations. There is no need to further comment on the importance of the groin as a target, as exemplified in the *Krav Maga* series below.

The kicks described here are exactly the same as the basic Essential front kicks mentioned, but exclusively targeting the groin. Other Essential Kicks are especially suited for groin kicking, like the *Lift Kick* and the *Phantom Groin Kick*; the reader is invited to refer to further reading to complete his groin kicks array.

Key points

- Chamber back forcefully: Snap back and do not leave your foot around. The *whipping* effect adds damage to the groin area.
- But remember to kick into the target, not slap on the surface.
- Either feint towards his face to keep his attention up, or keep the upper body totally immobile to avoid telegraphing the kick.



The redoubtable Groin Front Kick as a counter

Classic Krav Maga series: Release from a hair grab with the groin kick as a mellowing strike

Classic Krav Maga series: Double wrist grab release with groin kick as a finishing blow

Description

The groin kick needs not be especially powerful: Speed and no-telegraphing are much more important qualities. The kick can be delivered with the rear leg, or with the front leg, statically or with hopping, or after some other footwork. Some chambering is needed but, again, not more than needed to complete trajectory, as illustrated below. Connect with the top of the foot and/or the ankle.

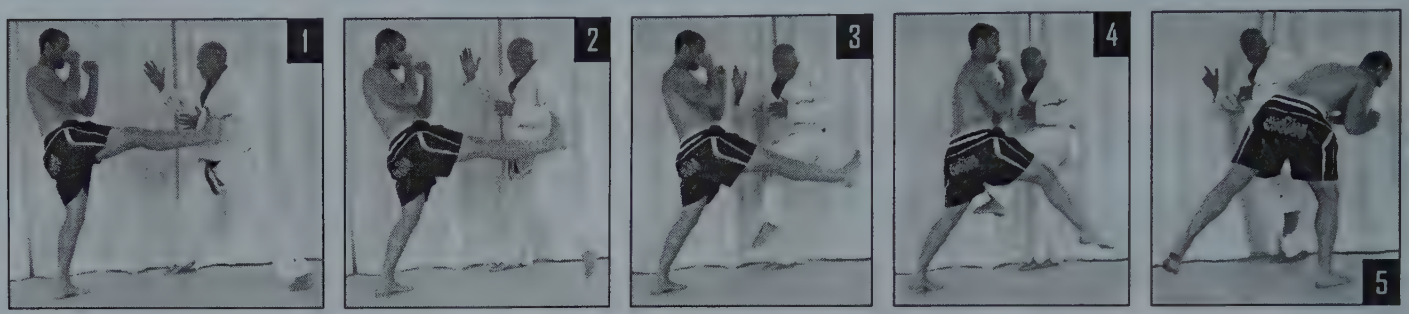
The illustration below right shows a forward hopping front-leg delivery of the same kick.

Rear-leg Front Groin Kick; chamber knee just as much as needed, not more

Front-leg Groin Kick

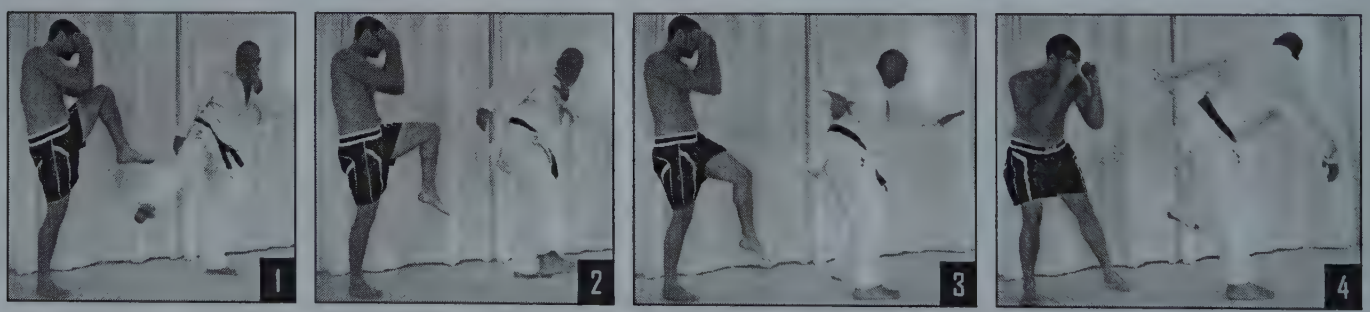
Typical application

The photos below show a typical basic *Sankukai Karate* application. The *Sankukai* style of Karate was founded by the Japanese champion *Yoshinao Nanbu* and is very popular in France where he settled down. It is a dynamic style strongly based on evasions and circular kicking techniques. The application presented is a basic codified exercise taught to students as "*Ippon Kumite Godan*", and also found in their basic *Randori Ni no Kata*: A penetrating front kick is evaded sideways (inside) to allow for a nearly-simultaneous rear-leg Groin Kick as the opponent's leg is still airborne. In the less sophisticated preparatory exercise described on page 42, the evasion is made safer with a block and catch; but note that the leg is released during the execution of the groin kick to allow the opponent's body to "fall" onto the rising kick.

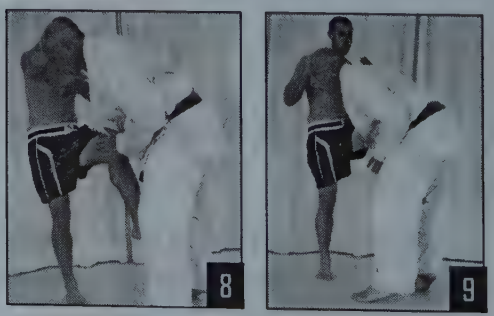


Groin Kick while evading a Front Kick without blocking it; speed is of the essence

The sequence below shows an application of the kick against a frequent user of Spin-back Hook Kicks. Evade his preparatory low kick by lifting your front leg, and crouch down while he spins back to let his high Hook Kick fly over your bent body. Crouch as much as your style or physiology would allow: A *capoeirista* would get very low and use his hands to rebound. Straighten up *as soon as the kick has passed you over* and kick him in the groin while he lands his foot. You can also jab his face simultaneously for good measure.



Crouch below a Spin-back Hook Kick and stand up while kicking his open groin

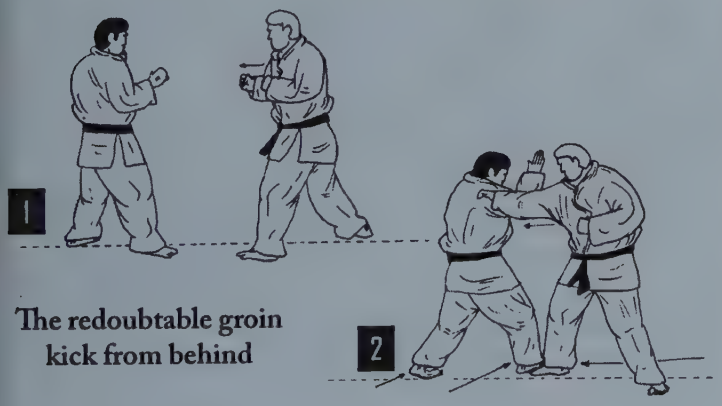


Specific training

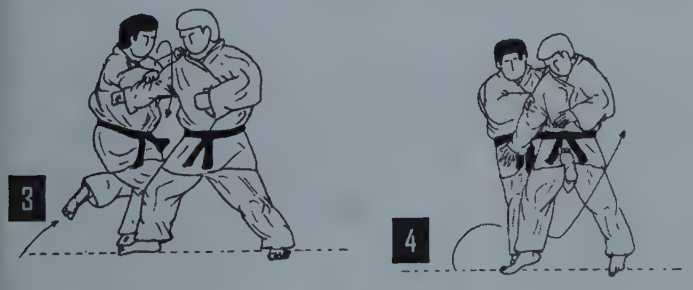
Drill for speed on a heavy bag hanging with bottom *at groin level.* Strive to deliver the kick with no tell-tales and from different distances.

Self defense

The following sequence describes a very efficient self-defense technique that can be used each time you find yourself on the blind side of an assailant. Evade a straight attack on your opponent's outside and control his front arm. Pivot to deliver an Upward Front Kick with the top of the ankle or even the shin into his groin *from behind.* Only then, release his front arm and bend down to get hold of both his ankles that you will pull back and up while striking his lower back with the top of your head. This will cause him to fall hard forward. As you hold both legs open, you can kick the groin, again, as he falls! You can then follow up with many techniques: We have shown here a stomp kick to the ankle to neutralize him, but you could deliver a flying stomp, or jump on his back if you are a good submission-ground-fighter.

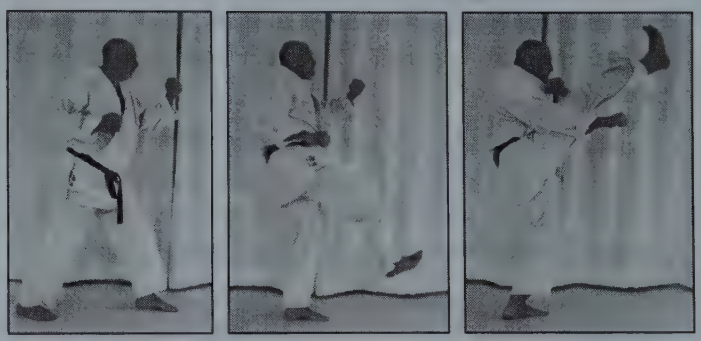


The redoubtable groin kick from behind



Illustrative photos

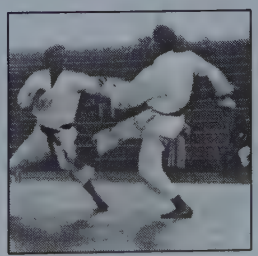
The Essential Upward Front Kick



The Essential Straight-leg Upward Front Kick

The Essential Front Lift Kick

The Essential Front Groin Ghost Kick



Vintage low front kick in tournament – *Roy Faige*

4. The High-Chambered Stomp Front Kick

Mae Fumikomi (Karatedo)

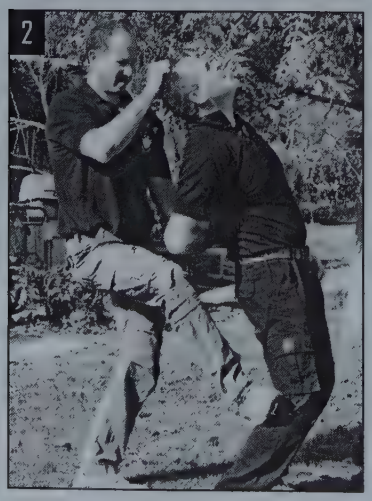
General

Stomp kicks need full chambering to deserve the appellation *stomp*. They are extremely easy to learn and very effective against a whole array of targets that we will mention here. Of course, it is, again, a kick of choice for self-defense, especially if you are wearing hard soled shoes.

Stomp kicks, although more in their side kick forms, do appear in traditional karate forms, which give them definite "*Lettres de Noblesse*". It is therefore a must for the serious Martial Artist to practice and master them.

The stomp is also obviously ideal for very close combat (Photo 1 below).

The stomp in a clinching situation



The Stomp Kick in a classic Krav Maga application

Description

The figure below shows the delivery: You simply lift the knee forward in a full chambering, and then straighten the leg down directly towards the target in a crushing motion. Do not let your upper body extend up, as if straightening, while stomping: crouch with the stomp in order to put your whole body into the downward movement and not dissipate energy. According to the circumstances, you can either chamber (partly) back or let the foot land and stay on the target. You connect with the whole arch of the foot or the heel only. According to the target you are hitting, you can also tilt the foot outward, with no other difference of execution: You will have to do that if you aim for the ankle joint from the front as shown below, or the back of the knee (photo 2).

Chamber high and stomp with heel or whole foot; tilt foot if warranted

There is a variation of the kick which allows for even more power into the stomp: Just like with the *hikite* of *Karate* punches, you lift the standing foot while stomping with the other from the chamber position: See left for the execution on a focus pad.

Hop while stomping

Key points

- Chamber as high as possible for power.
- Keep you guard up, as you are in close range.
- Kick through the target, do not rebound on its surface. Think about crushing an insect…
- Crouch with the upper body while kicking and put your whole body into the movement.

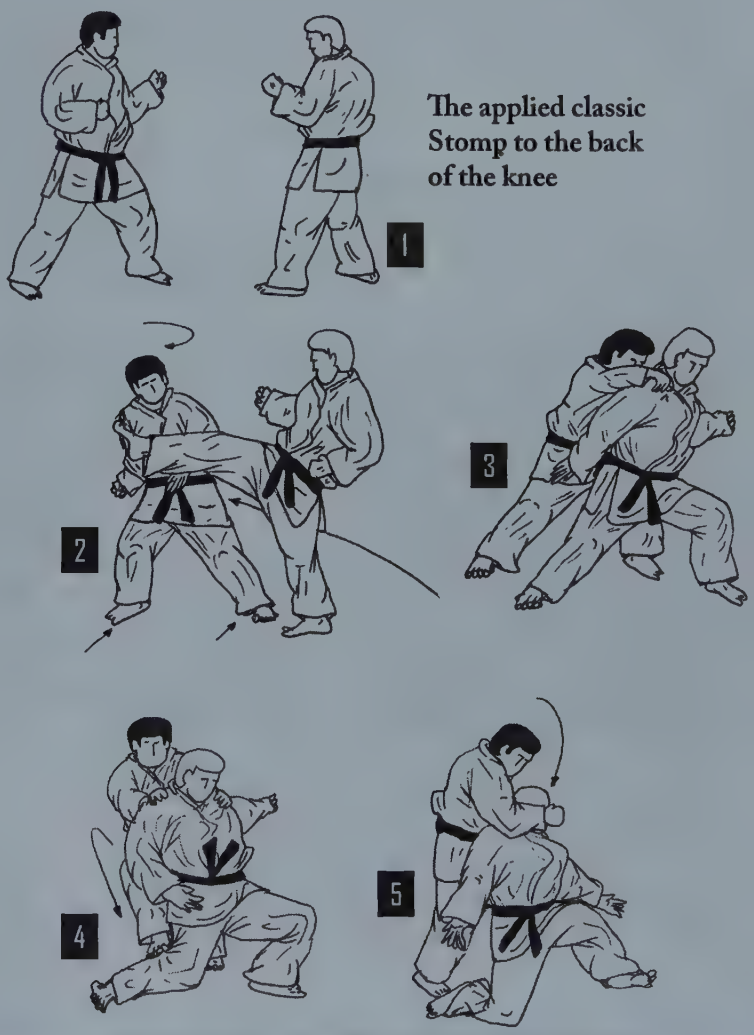
Targets

Everything you can stomp on, according to the relative situation to the opponent: toes, thigh (Photo 3 below), back of the knee (Photo 2, page 46), Achilles' heel (page 48, top) and hands, especially fingers (page 48, bottom), head (Photo 9, page 49), ribs (Photo 2, page 50), armpit (page 51), ankle from all angles (page 52), front and side knee and more…

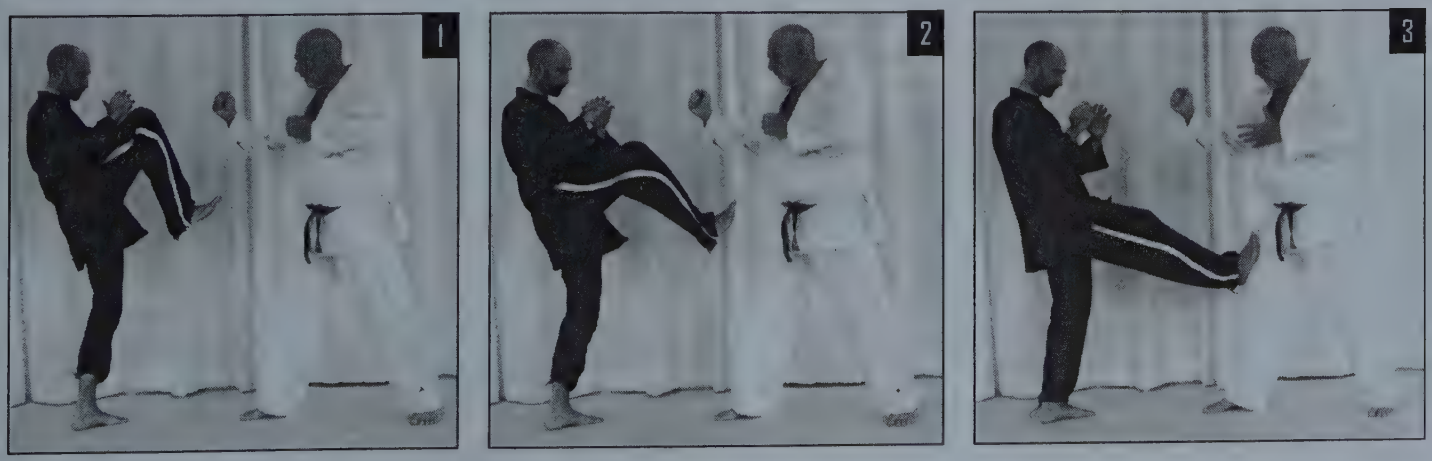
Typical application

The sequence below shows an interesting application of the stomp kick, targeting the front thigh of an opponent: You chamber high as a feint, letting your opponent believe that you are trying to deliver a penetrating front kick to the body or face. But you will stomp kick his front thigh from your upper chambered position. This is a very surprising and painful kick.

The illustrations that follow show the most classic use of the kick: the *outward-tilted* version to the back of the knee. You evade, block, overstretch and redirect a fully committed front kick to find yourself on the blind outside of the attacker, or even "have" his full back. You immediately grab both his shoulders and stomp kick the back of his knee. Follow up with a hammer-fist strike to his face or clavicle for example.



The applied classic Stomp to the back of the knee



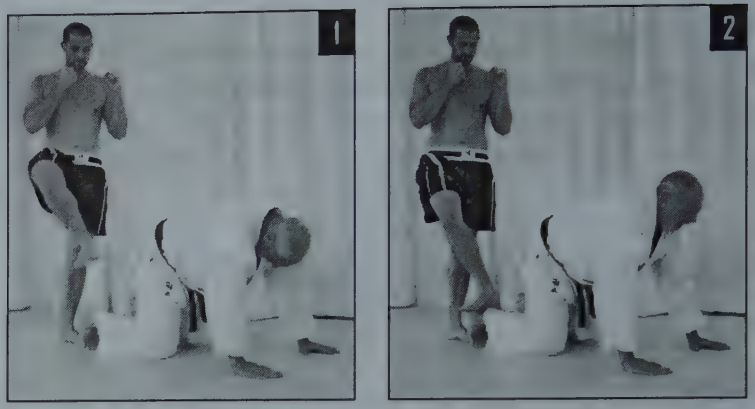
The high chamber when targeting the thigh acts as a misdirecting feint

Specific training

You have to train for power, feeling the importance of the high chambering and for the feeling at impact, which can be surprising if you are not used to it. Crushing kicks do not come naturally and power training must be drilled. Practice both the classic way and the outward-tilted version on a lying heavy bag, a medicine ball, a lying tire, a focus pad,...

Self defense

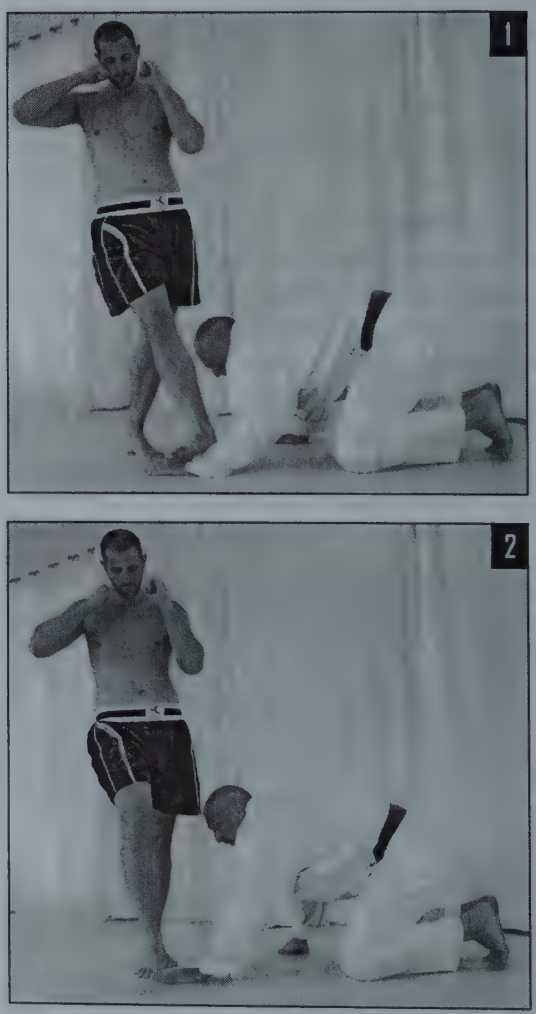
Most applications will be described here, as they are rather gruesome and more suitable to a self-defense situation or a MMA contest, than the milder settings of regular classes or sport tournaments. Please read first and carefully the following words of caution:



Stomp onto Achilles' tendon only if warranted

<u>A stomp is an extremely effective and aggressive maneuver, as the "target" is held in place by the floor. When executing it in a self-defense situation, you should carefully consider the ethical and legal aspects: Are you justified in causing serious bodily harm to your aggressor in this situation? In fact you could rephrase this: Would a judge or a jury consider your action necessary to safeguard your own safety or that of others, or could you just have left the scene or taken less brutal action with no danger? And take into account that stomping a downed opponent will look to any witness as brutal and going against every ingrained fair-play sense of normative citizens.</u>

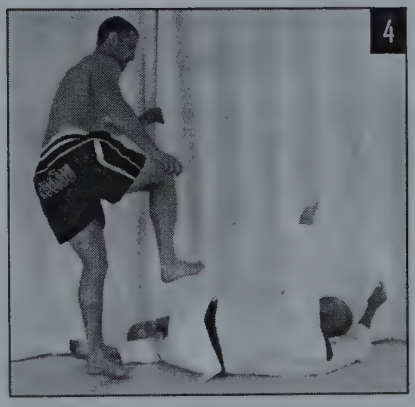
The following photos show the use of the stomp kick against an opponent brought to his knees (in quadruped position), but the principles stay true if the opponent lies on the floor in any position. If you are behind him or to his side: Stomp his Achilles' tendon (Photos 1 and 2, top right). If you are in front of him: Stomp on his hand or fingers (Photos 1 and 2, right). Remember the legal and ethical ramifications: Stomp on his Achilles' heel only if he keeps attacking after being taken down, and in order to make sure he cannot pursue you, nothing more. Stomping on his fingers could be justified for example, if he is armed or if he keeps grabbing you from the floor to prevent your escaping.

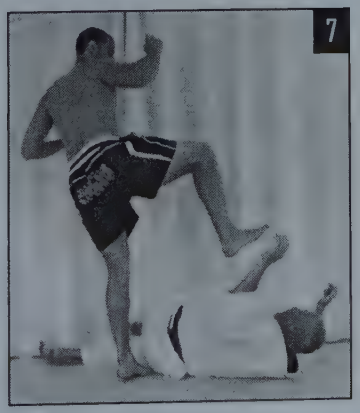


Stomp onto wrist or fingers in Self-Defense situations

The photos on this page show the use of the kick against an opponent you have just downed or thrown and who is lying on his back in front of you. He will probably lift his legs between you in a ground guard. As soon as he does that, grab his ankles and throw them forcefully aside to make him roll slightly on his side, and immediately stomp his ribs or head.

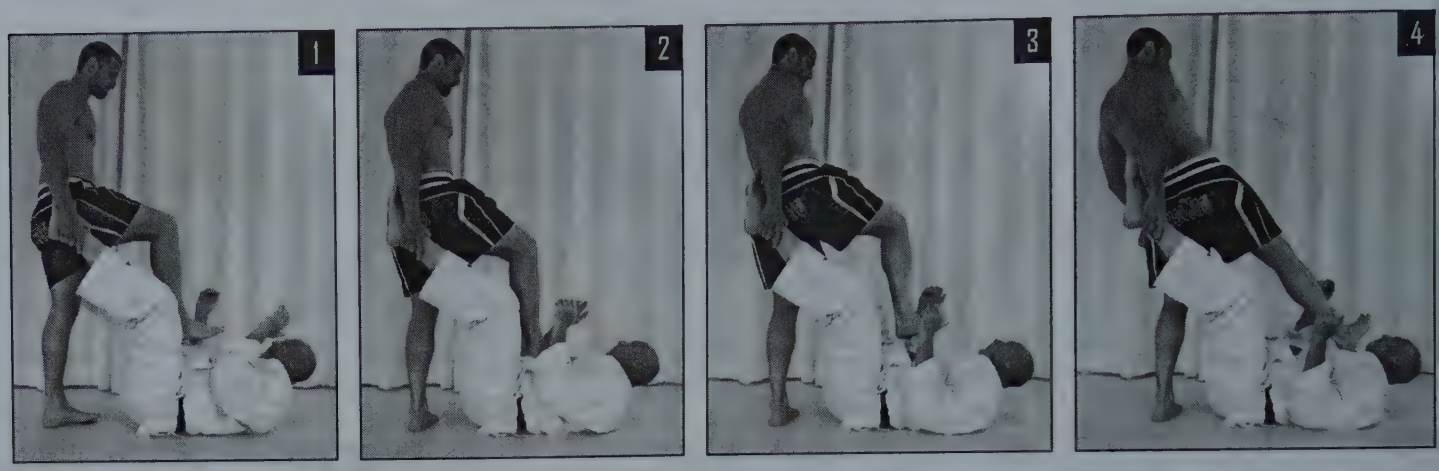
Stomp the ribs of a downed opponent



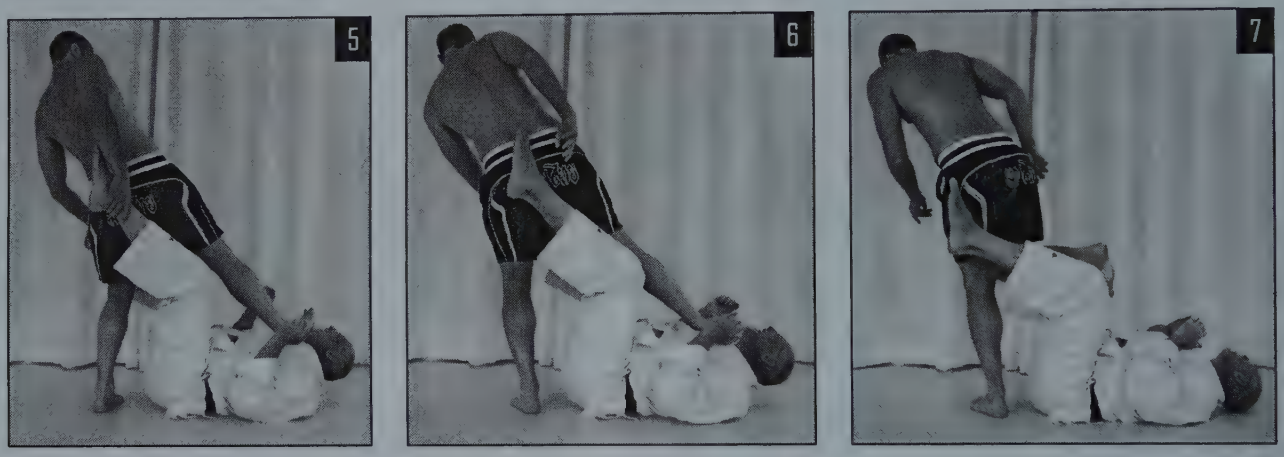


If warranted, you can stomp the head of a downed opponent as he lies on the back or on the side

If you have good control of the downed opponent's legs and hold both feet, you can stomp him between his legs: in his groin (self-explanatory, not illustrated), in the body (Photos 1 and 2), or in the face (Photos 3 to 7). It is imperative that you move away after the kick, as illustrated: You are in a rather dangerous position, especially against an experienced grappler.

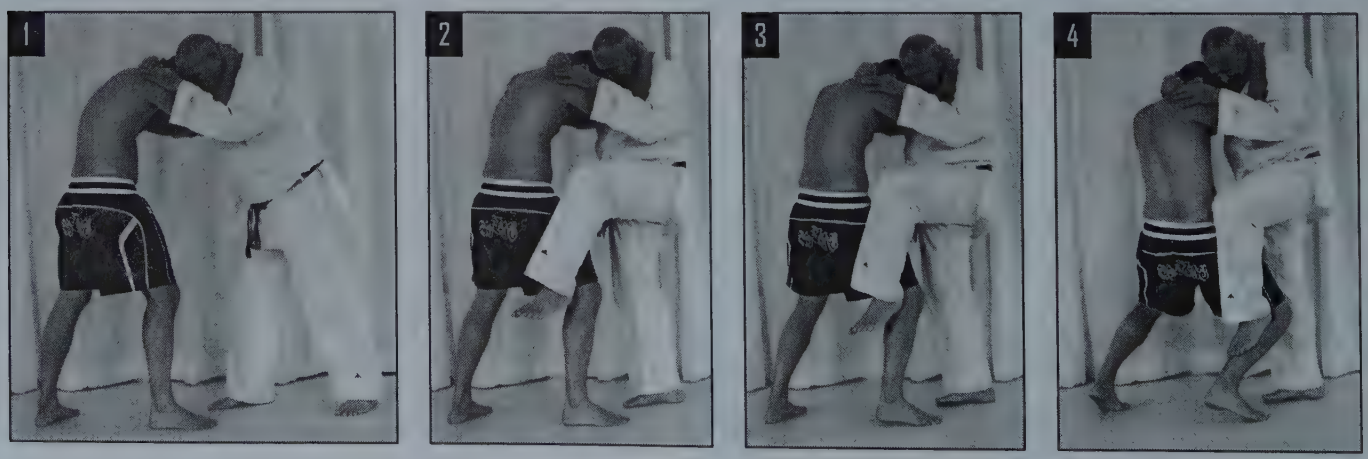


Stomp the plexus or ribs while keeping control of the legs



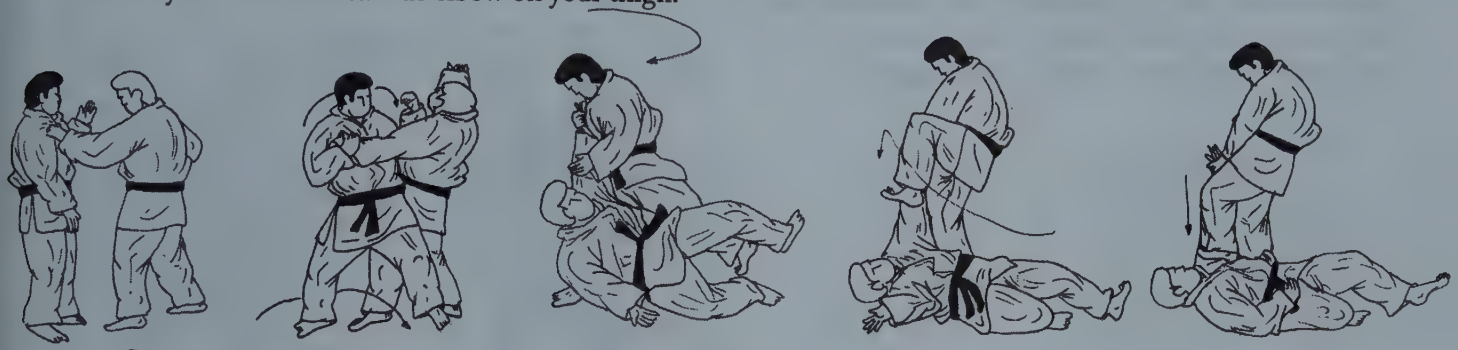
Do not stay between his legs after the stomp: This is a dynamic attack

These photos show an interesting and slightly exotic variation of the classical stomp kick: stomping down on the back of his knee from your position *in front of him*; basically in a clinch where you overtake his leg from the outside. It would be recommended to attack his face simultaneously with an arm strike.



Surprise: Attack his back knee from the front

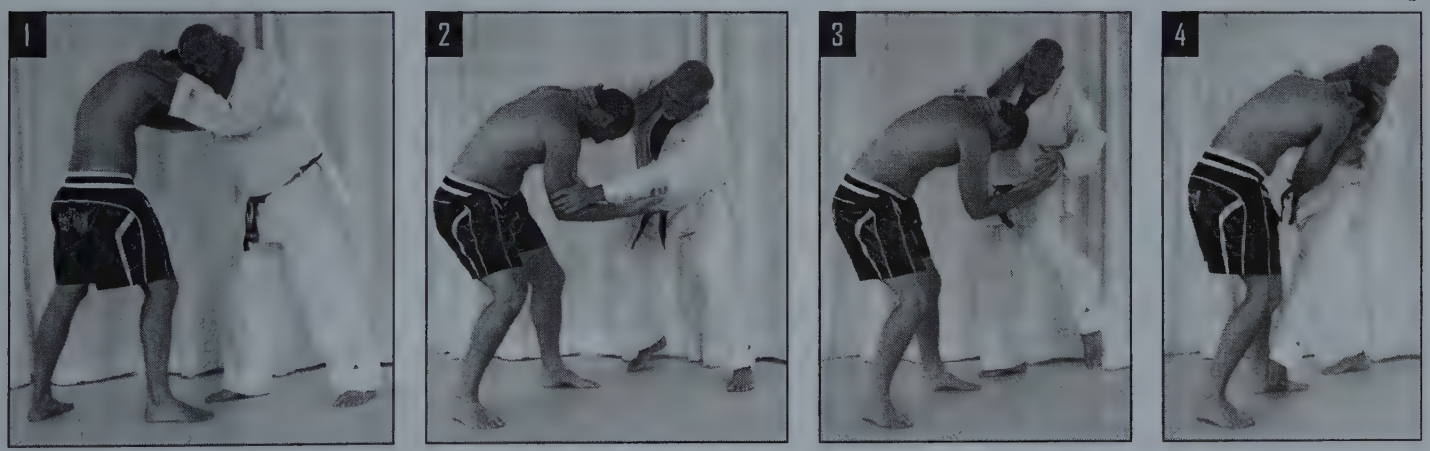
The figures that follow show a classic use of the stomp kick for self-defense, as a follow-up to a take-down which keeps control of the opponent's arm. (This is applicable to nearly all Judo or Jiu-Jitsu throws!) In this example, the assailant grabs your lapel. Before he can hit you, you grab his hand and step behind his front leg while striking his biceps with your forearm. You then pivot to throw him to the ground by reaping his leg but keep hold of his grabbing arm. As soon as he hits the ground, you *stomp into his armpit* while pulling on the arm. You can then pivot and get down on your knee to break his elbow on your thigh.



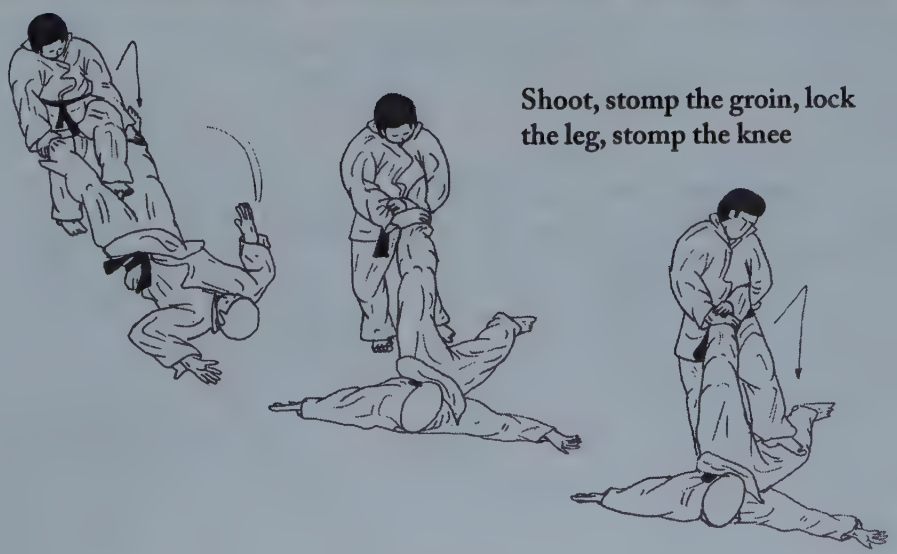
Stomping the offered armpit is a dangerous technique

The sequence below shows the stomp as the natural follow-up to a high knee strike. *The knee strike takes the additional function of the high chamber!* From a clinch position in which you hold your opponent's head with both hands, you side-step to your opponent's side while releasing with your further hand. You now push his head down with both hands while kneeing his face from your side position. *From the high kneeing position* you stomp his foot forcefully. Follow up. This is a very surprising and useful combination from the clinch, as your opponent does not expect the (simultaneous) hand-release and side-step.

Evade, knee and stomp

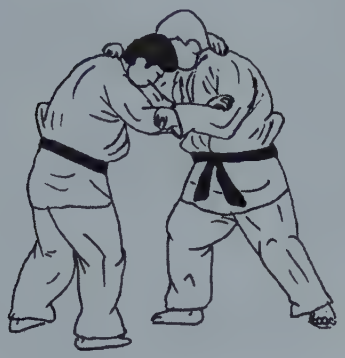


The illustrations at right show an offensive combination starting with a double-leg take-down ("shoot"): As soon as you lift his legs while pushing back and he starts falling down, you stand up and *stomp-kick him between the legs*. Having so "softened" him, you can now set up an ankle-lock and then stomp him again on the knee of the lying leg. You then can keep the stomping foot in place for pain and better control of the ankle-lock.



Shoot, stomp the groin, lock the leg, stomp the knee

This series shows the use of the painful scraping stomp kick in a clinching situation. Scraping has been mentioned in the section about the Soccer low Front kick. This example shows the full scraping version of the kick, with the stomping foot staying on top of the opponent's foot, as a foot trap while you push him down. You kick directly into grating position (straight Front Kick) and then stomp by gliding along the shin!

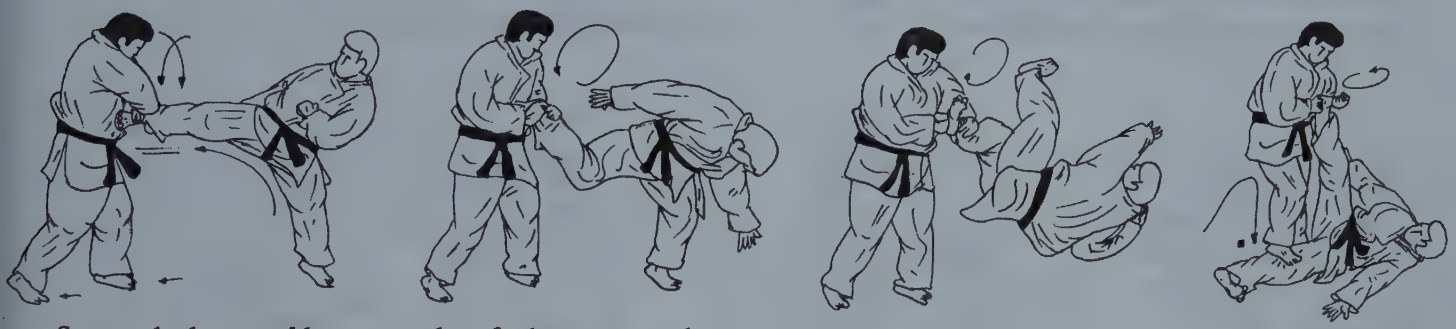


Soccer low Front Kick to the knee, then scraping Stomp to the ankle

This is the classic counter to a "come-along" arm-lock, in which you stomp the back of the knee without having to tilt your foot, because of your relative position to the attacker. You can follow-up with an Achilles' tendon stomp if the situation warrants it.

Classic release from standing "come-along" Figure-4 arm-lock"

We have already seen a stomp on the knee to facilitate a leg-lock. The figures below describe a similar application: Stomp the knee joint and use the stomp to stay in control of the opponent. In this example, you evade a Side Kick by retreating your hips just enough, and get control of his foot with an "X- block" from above (Remember *Shorinji Kempo's Hiki-Mi* mentioned in the Introduction!). Twist his foot for a full turn-and-a-half, in order to throw him down in a full somersault. Keep control of his foot while you stomp on the knee of his other leg. Keep your foot on the knee while you twist his foot in a painful ankle-lock.

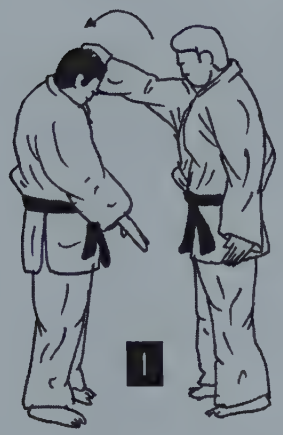


Stomp the knee and keep it in place for better control

You remember the stomp to the armpit after a throw. The following series shows the classical use of the stomp kick to the ribs as another immediate follow-up to a successful throw. As your assailant catches your wrist, you pivot to his outside, circle his wrist from the outside to reverse the grip, and hit him with a palm strike to the side of the face. Having taken control of his attacking arm, you pull him forward while encircling his neck from behind and putting him in arm-lock position. Hit the neck with the arm forcefully as you get into position. As he starts to resist the move, you reverse the momentum, pulling his head back by the chin to throw him back over your thigh. As he falls to the floor you stomp his ribs in an uninterrupted flow of the maneuver.

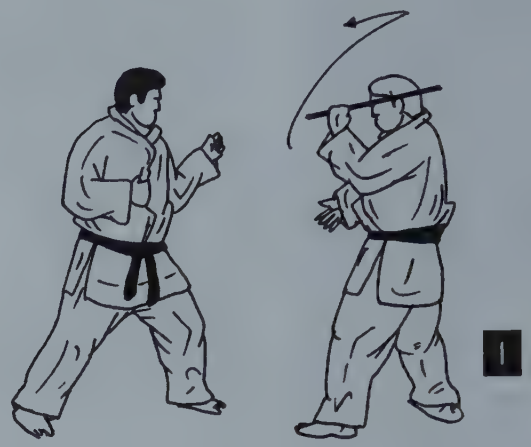
The natural Stomp to the ribs after a take-down

These illustrations show the use of the kick to painfully draw his attention away from an evading move you are starting. In this case, as the assailant grips your hair from the front, you immediately catch his wrist to reduce pain and control him, while delivering a Stomp Kick to his front foot. Use the pain created for a classic release: disentangle yourself by retreating and pivoting to place his arm in arm-lock position. Follow up.

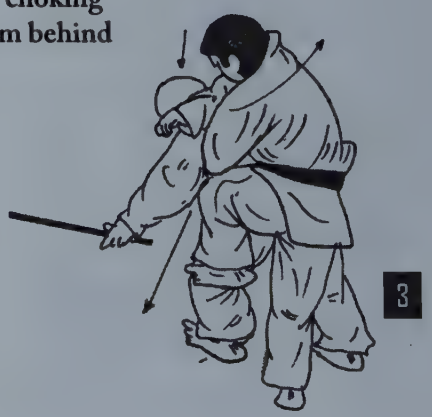


Nothing like a stomp to soften an opponent for more incoming techniques

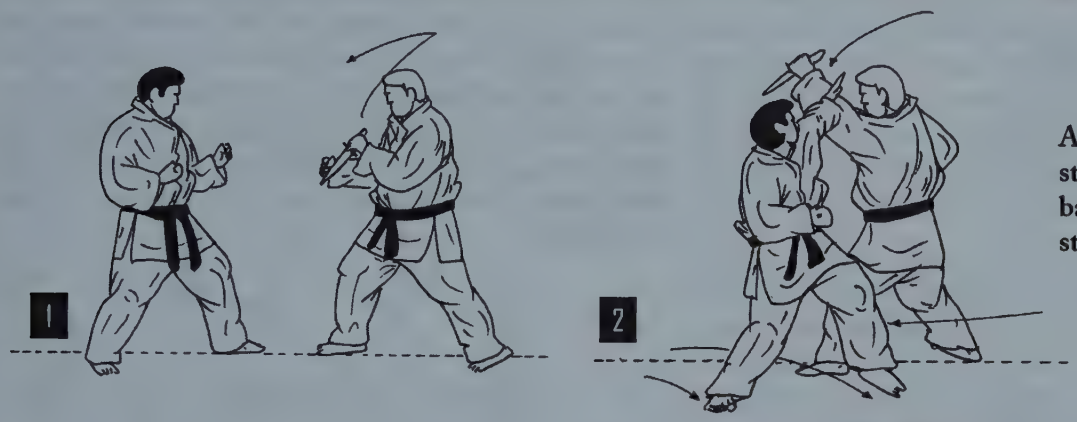
The illustrations below show another natural use of the kick, as an integral part of a rear choke technique (*Hadaka Jime – Judo*). You evade and control from the outside a downward stick strike, and catch his lapel as high as possible with your rear hand. Moving to his back, use your other elbow to push the back of his neck while pulling on his lapel. In this classic choke position, stomp the back of his knee.



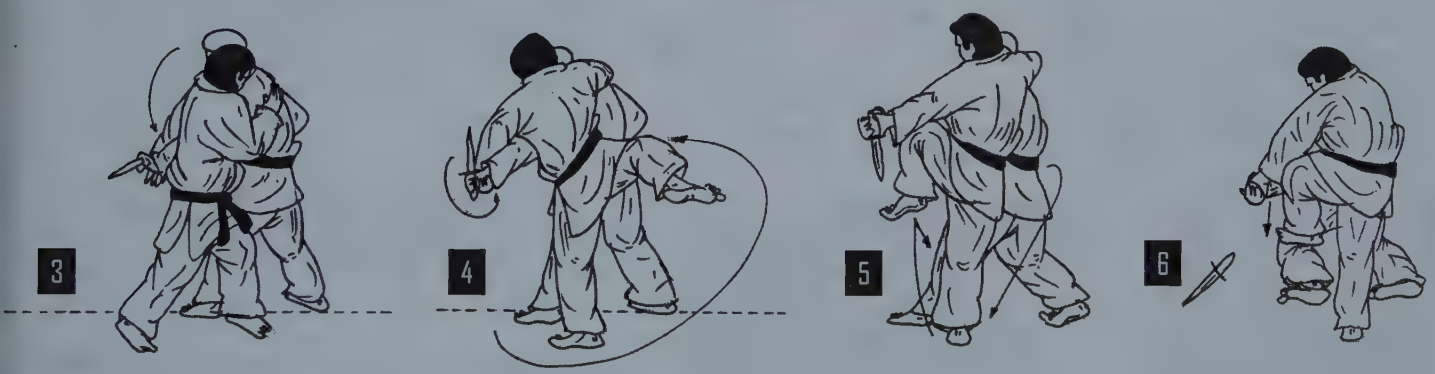
The rear-knee Stomp is a natural for choking maneuvers from behind



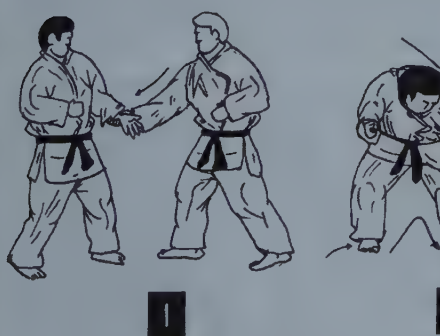
We have already seen the stomp as a natural continuation of a high knee strike, the knee strike taking the role of the high chamber. We will share another example of a rear-knee Stomp from behind the opponent; but, this time, the knee strike is an arm-break and there is no landing of the foot in-between. As shown in the figures below, you evade a downward knife attack by stepping forward and to his outside while controlling his descending arm. Stay very close to his back while getting control of the knife wrist. Try to catch his throat from behind with your other hand, while delivering a full-powered circular knee strike to his kidneys. Keep hold of the throat, (or chin or shoulder) while trying to break his (knife) elbow joint with an upward knee strike of the other leg. (Turn the wrist to position the elbow down!) *From the high knee position*, stomp directly down into the back of his knee.



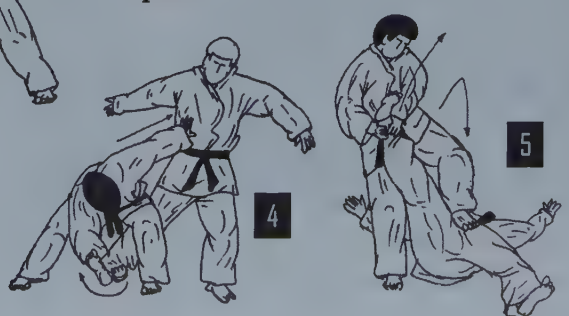
Arm-breaking knee strike turns into back-of-the-knee stomp



These figures illustrate an interesting last use of the stomp kick: *To keep your opponent's foot in place until you can come and catch it for further use!* The example also shows a fast front-leg Stomp Kick. In this instance, an aggressor gets hold of your wrist from your side. Before he can complete his attack, stomp fast from the front leg onto his front foot. Immediately bend forward and extend your arm down and towards him to dissolve the hold. In a smooth follow-up, deliver a flowing upward elbow strike below his chin. Keep your Stomp on his foot to keep it in place, until you can bend and catch it with your other hand coming in between your legs. Lift his ankle while pushing his upper body back to throw him to the ground, where you'll stomp his groin.



Fast front-leg Stomp Kick with the purpose of keeping his foot in place



5. The Tilted-Heel Low Front Kick

General

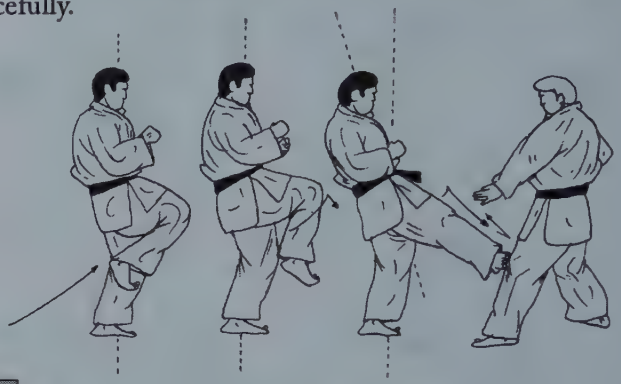
This very important kick is simply the low version of the Essential Tilted-heel Front Kick already mentioned. It is a penetrating kick in this case—not a stomp kick—and should be practiced as such. Because it is penetrating and directed down, it has some feeling of stomping that it is important to take into account. But on the whole, it is a snap kick that requires chambering back after impact a few inches into the target, just like the basic Essential version.

The kick is very typical of East-Asian styles, like Indonesian *Pencak Silat*, and of the soft styles of Kung Fu, and I have seen it named the "Hsing-I Kick" by *Hsing-I* practitioners. It is also in use in many other styles though, and it should be mentioned that it is a great stop-kick (See Photo A).

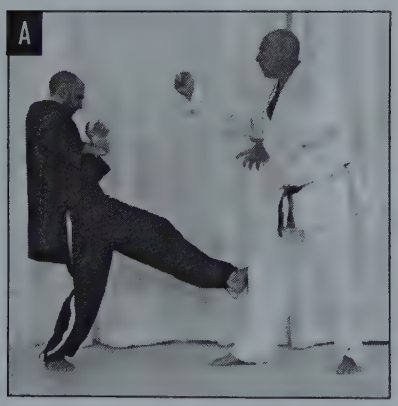
The target—usually the knee from all sides—is struck with the arch of the foot or (preferably) with the heel.

Description

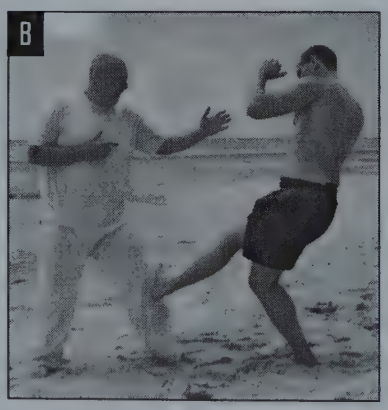
The illustration below describes the orthodox delivery of the kick: chamber just like for a regular Penetrating Front Kick, and then extend the leg straight into the target while tilting the foot outwards. Connect with the heel part of the arch of the foot, and *thrust the hips forward into the kick*, just like for any other penetrating kick. If the circumstances dictate, you can slightly lean backwards while thrusting the hips forward. *Recoil* forcefully.



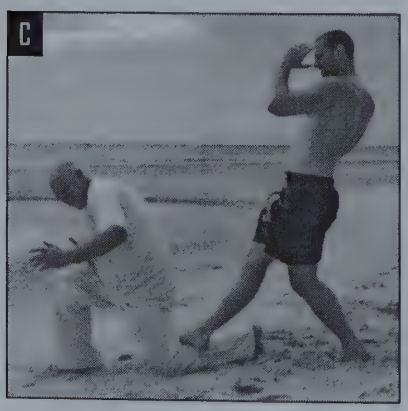
Essential basic Tilted-heel Front Kick, but targeting the knee



The Tilted-heel Front Kick as a stop-kick



The Tilted-heel Front Kick to the knee



The Tilted-heel Front Kick to the back of the knee

The Tilted-heel Front Kick to the side of the knee

Key points

- Keep your guard up.
- This is not a stomp: chamber back after kicking an inch *into* the target.
- Use the hips for the thrusting movement.

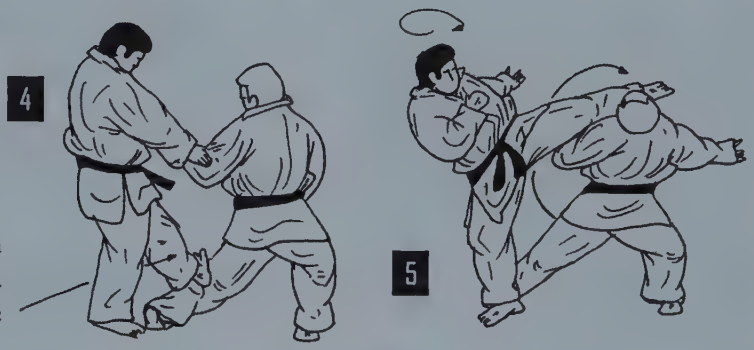
Targets

The knee, from all sides. Also the front thigh and the upper shin.

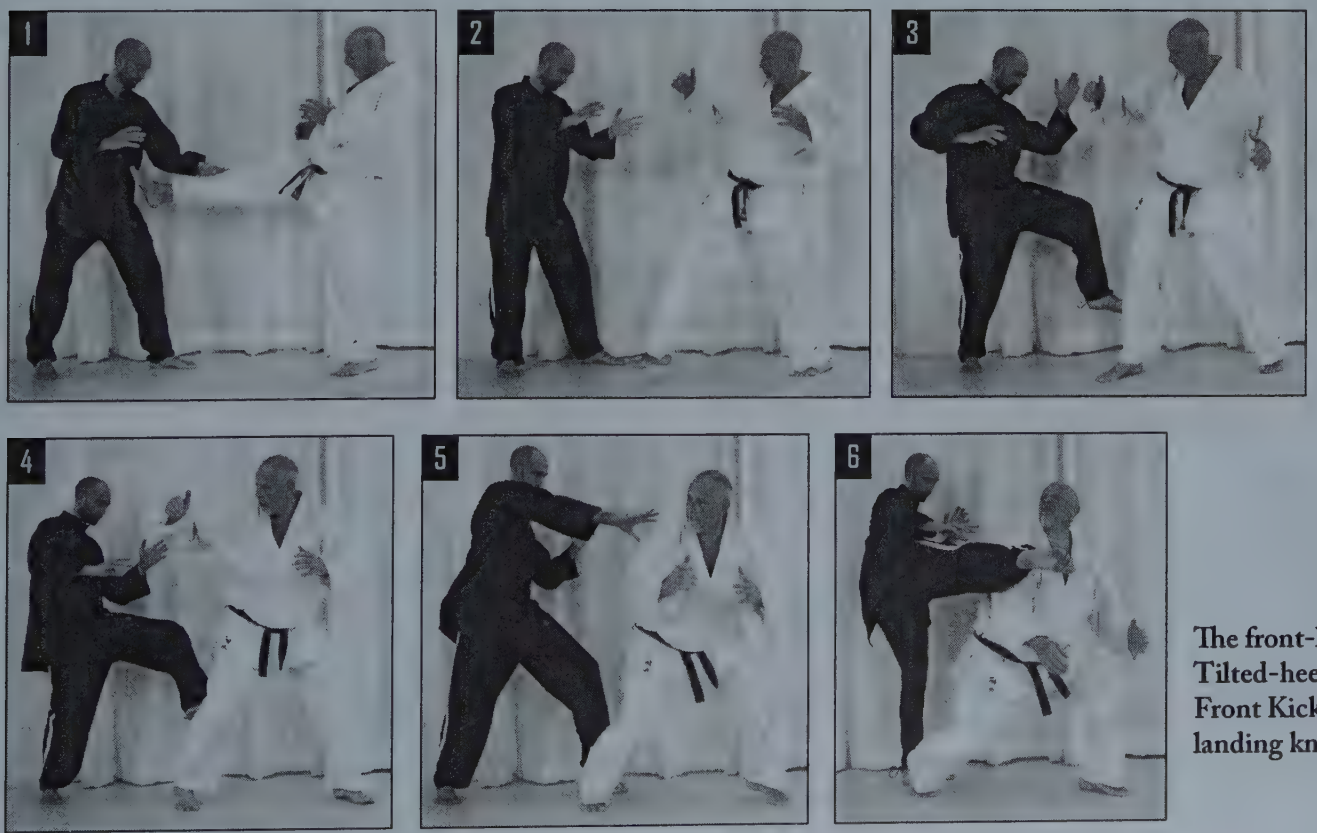
Typical application

These illustrations show a typical application of the kick: Attacking a landing kicking leg. In this case, you block and redirect a Hopping Side Kick from your opponent, forcing him to land forward a bit off-balance. You keep control of his front hand, and immediately use your rear leg for a Tilted-heel Low Front Kick to the side of his knee. Follow up with one of my favorite combinations: use the same leg—without landing the foot—to throw a Roundhouse Kick to his face, as he pivots and bends down on account of the hit knee.

Try to always low-kick a landing leg

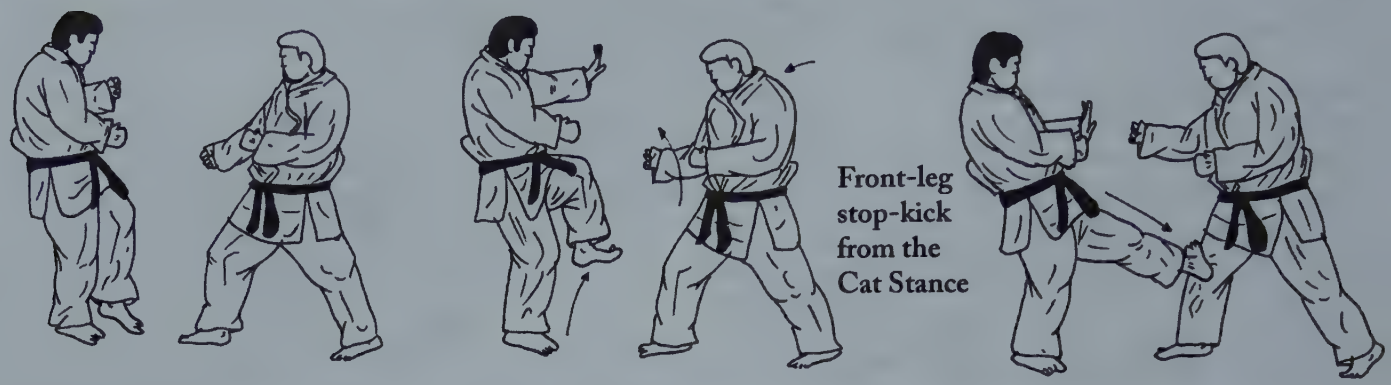


In a variation of the previous application, you can low-kick the landing leg with your front foot and follow with a high Roundhouse Kick from the other (rear) leg, as shown in the photos below.



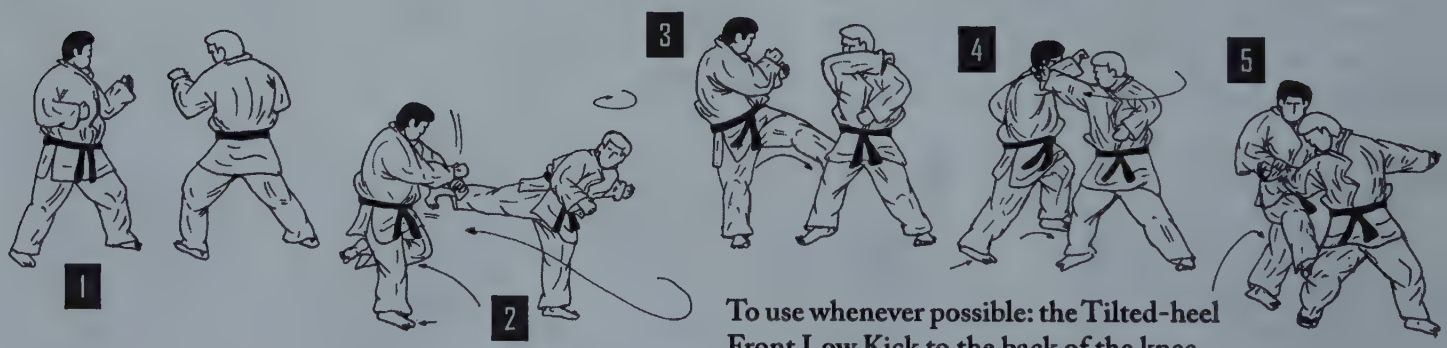
The front-leg Tilted-heel Low Front Kick to a landing knee

This series shows again the front-leg variation in its preferred application as a stop-kick. The classic way to drill this application is in the "cat stance" common to all traditional arts from Japan, Okinawa, China or Indonesia. In this stance, called *Neko Ashi Dachi* in Japanese, the front leg is weightless (although it is advised to make it as unnoticeable as possible). As soon as your opponent shows signs of launching any attack, you lift the front knee; you can simultaneously extend your hand towards his eyes as a distraction. You kick his front knee as he starts moving.



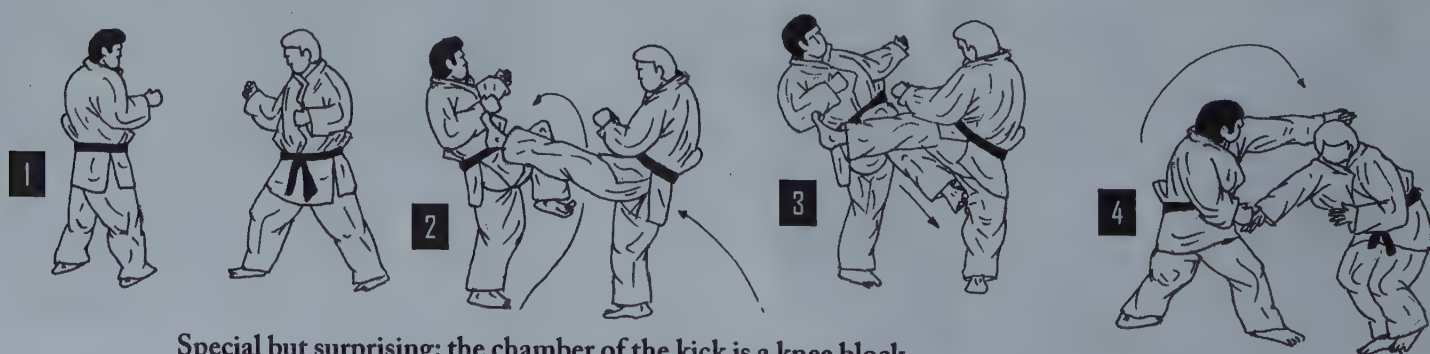
Front-leg stop-kick from the Cat Stance

Below is the classic targeting of the sensitive back-of-the-knee. It is presented at the end of an application starting with a variation of the rearwards evasion, that this time also includes a pulling back of the front leg. As your opponent attacks you with a Spin-back Back Kick, you retreat just enough to evade the kick while controlling it. You pull the hips and the leg back just enough, but keep a forward upper body for better blocking and faster countering. Your airborne leg does roundhouse-kick his landing leg; and you land it deep forwards on his outside while blocking an eventual natural back-fist strike follow-up. You are very much in his back now, and take control of his arm and shoulder while using your rear leg for the Low Front Kick into the back of his knee. Follow up.



To use whenever possible: the Tilted-heel Front Low Kick to the back of the knee

The illustrations that follow show a special application of the kick, interesting although probably too sophisticated for casual use. You block an incoming Front Kick with an outside knee sweep of the front leg. From this knee high position, you attack directly his standing knee in a Tilted-heel Low Front Kick. You can follow up with a ridge-hand strike to the side of his head as he stumbles. It is a great drill for speed and flexibility, and can be used by experienced artists in appropriate situations.



Special but surprising: the chamber of the kick is a knee block

Specific training

This is a kick that needs drilling in order to differentiate it clearly from a stomp. Practice on a tire and a lying bag, while concentrating on the recoil.

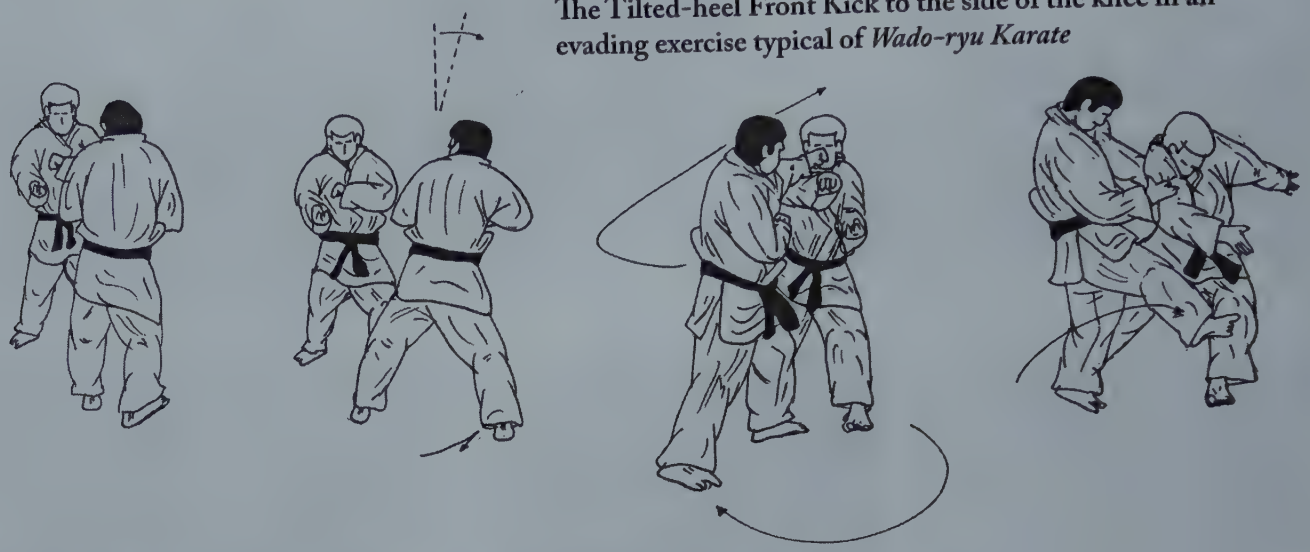
Self defense

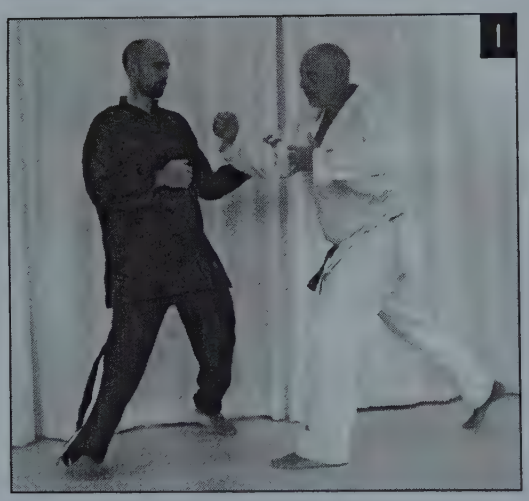
This is a very punishing combination that can be used after any successful use of the ubiquitous Straight-leg Low Roundhouse Kick (Generic "*Low kick*"). In this example, you evade, block and redirect your assailant's kick, so that you find yourself on his outside, and can deliver a punishing Straight-leg Roundhouse to the thigh of his landing leg. You then grab both his shoulders and deliver a full-hipped Tilted-heel Front Kick to the back of his knee. While you recoil and lower the foot, get hold of his head by the chin and/or hair, and pivot while pulling his head back. Pull the head back and down while hitting it with a powerful upward knee strike. Lower the knee while pulling him down.

In this punishing combination the Tilted-heel Front Kick is used to place the assailant off-balance to his rear

The illustrations below show a combination drilled into me in *Wado-ryu Karate* practice a long time ago. The *Wado-ryu* style of Karate is still close to its Ju-Jitsu roots and relies a lot on evading techniques and body movement (*Tai Sabaki*). In this example, you provoke your assailant into a committed reverse punch by feinting a side move to your inside while leaning slightly forward. As your opponent punches in the direction you are going, you switch directions and evade circularly to your outside while jabbing (*Nagashi Tsuki*, typical of *Wado-ryu*). You immediately catch his extending arm while front-kicking his front knee from the side. The Kung Fu version of this maneuver is illustrated by the photos that follow.

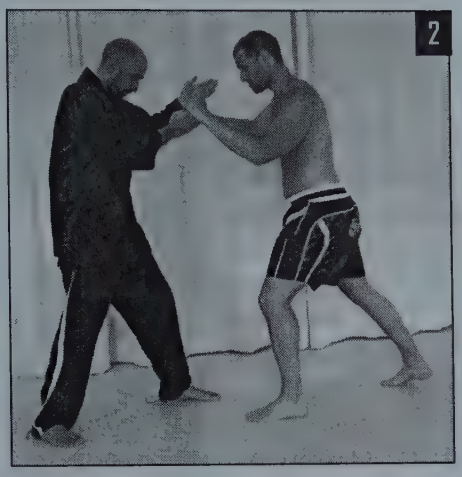
The Tilted-heel Front Kick to the side of the knee in an evading exercise typical of *Wado-ryu Karate*



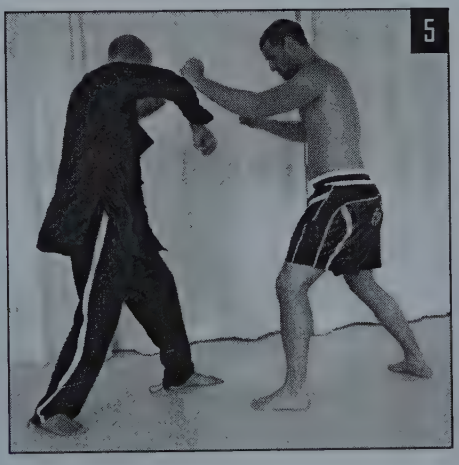


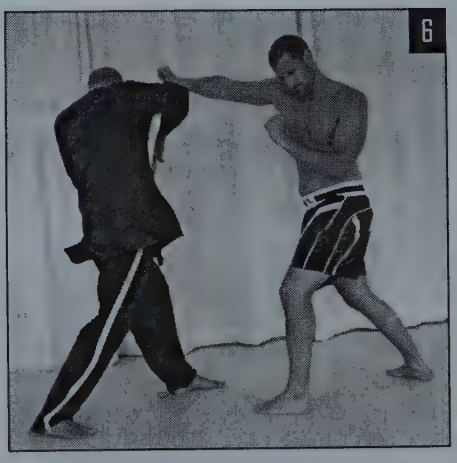
Evade the reverse punch while kicking the inside knee

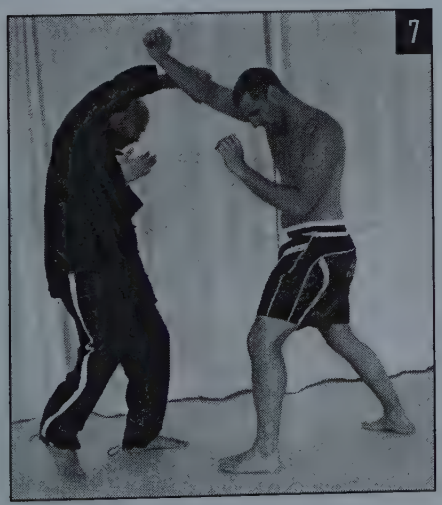
This series shows a typical Wing Chun-inspired combination, blocking three punches, catching the attacking arm and kicking punishingly, again, the *side* of the front knee.

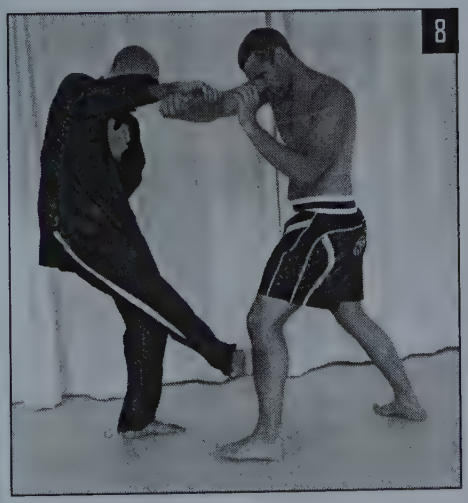


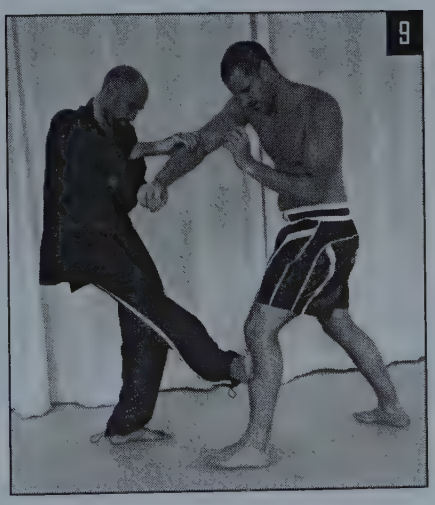
Block, block, block, catch, kick











6. The Low Roundhouse Kick

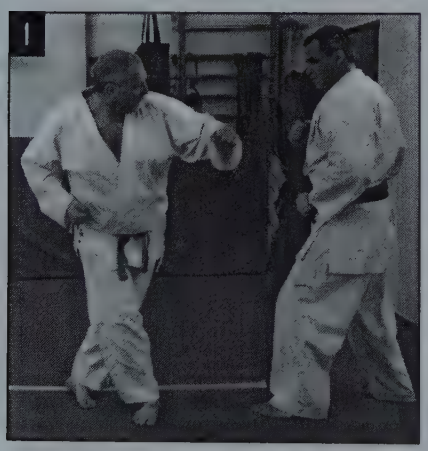
Gedan Mawashi Geri (Karatedo), Te Ka/Te Tad Lang (Muay Thai)

General

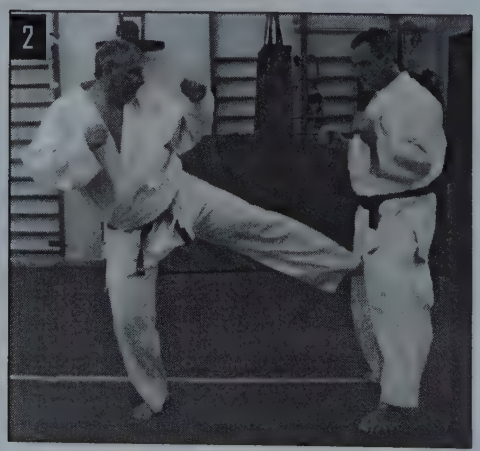
This, again, is a very simple but versatile kick: It a classic Essential Roundhouse Kick delivered below the belt. Please refer to previous work for the background about Roundhouse Kicks. The kick is of course different from the Straight-leg Roundhouse Low Kick presented later in section 7. Because of the low targets, the kick is more of a regular Roundhouse-type or even a small Roundhouse-type, rather than a *full* Roundhouse (Refer to Essential kicks' theory). The amount of chambering is, of course up to you, but some chambering is needed, as this a whipping kick that is recoiled.

This is a very fast kick, which can also be delivered from the front leg, and therefore is a great kick to harass the opponent or to start an offensive combination. Photos 1 and 2 show a classic cross-step delivery of the front-leg version of the kick, targeting the inner knee of the opponent's front leg.

An ubiquitous and versatile kick



Attrition-kick or leg-opener



Description

The figure at right shows the classic delivery connecting with the ball of the foot: chamber the knee, but not above the height of the target, with the leg at about 45 degrees; not a Full Roundhouse chamber, but not a Small Roundhouse front chamber either. Deliver a snappy kick with fast recoil. Connect with the ball of the foot (as illustrated) or the top of the foot.

Of course all variations are valid: chamber from full to small, height of knee, relative straightening of the leg.

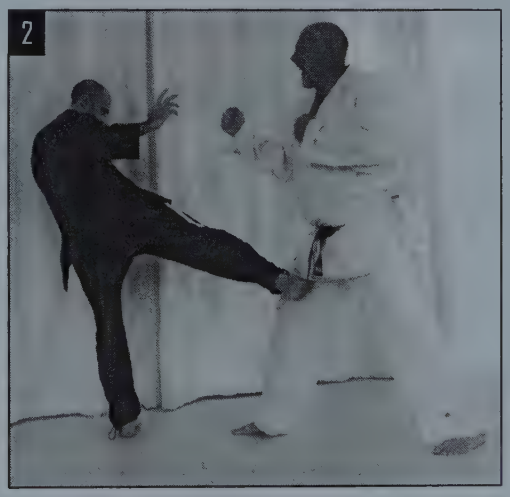
The Low Roundhouse Kick

Key points

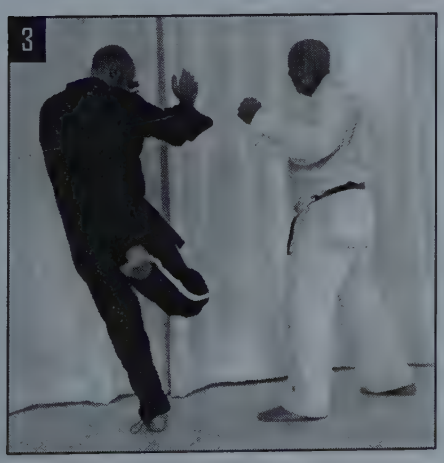
- This is a speed kick: avoid telegraphing moves, upper body as immobile as possible.
- Keep you guard up.
- Recoil fast and forcefully after penetrating slightly into the target.

Targets

The groin, all sides of the thigh (See Photos 1 and 2), the knee, the shins and calves. Also the ankles as shown in Photos 3 to 5. Of course, everything else if the opponent is down or kneeling.



Low Roundhouse Toe Kick to the inside thigh

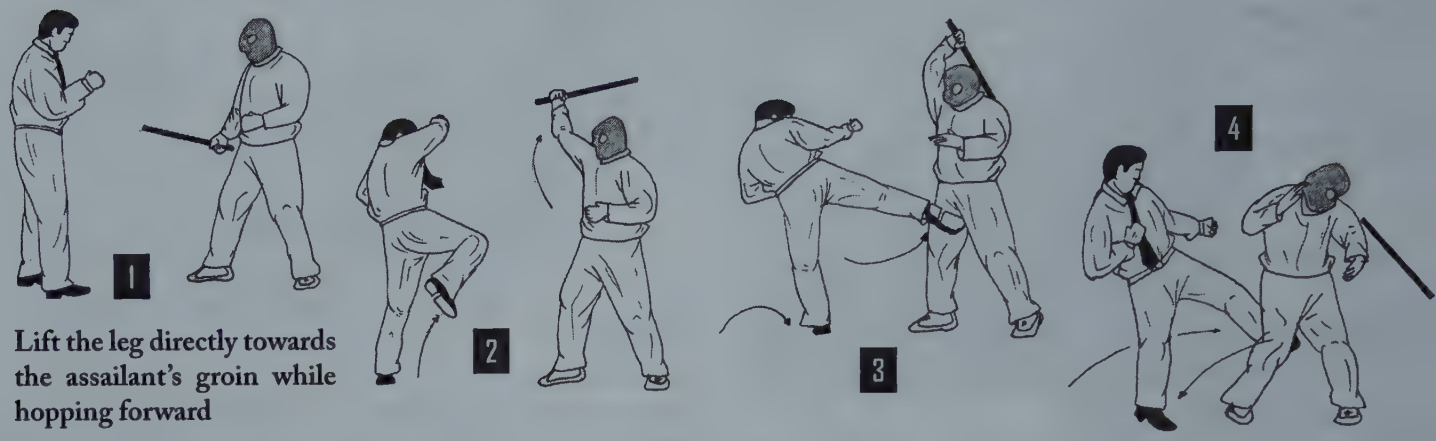


Low Roundhouse Kick to the outside ankle

Low Roundhouse Kick to inside ankle

Typical application

This sequence shows a very simple but effective variation applied to a self-defense situation. As the groin is the target, there is no need for any chambering: The *front* foot just lifts and travels directly towards the target. The distance is covered by hopping *after the front leg has started moving*, just as in the Essential Front-leg Hopping Roundhouse. You can follow up with a second Low Roundhouse or Straight-leg Low Roundhouse Kick, from the other leg.



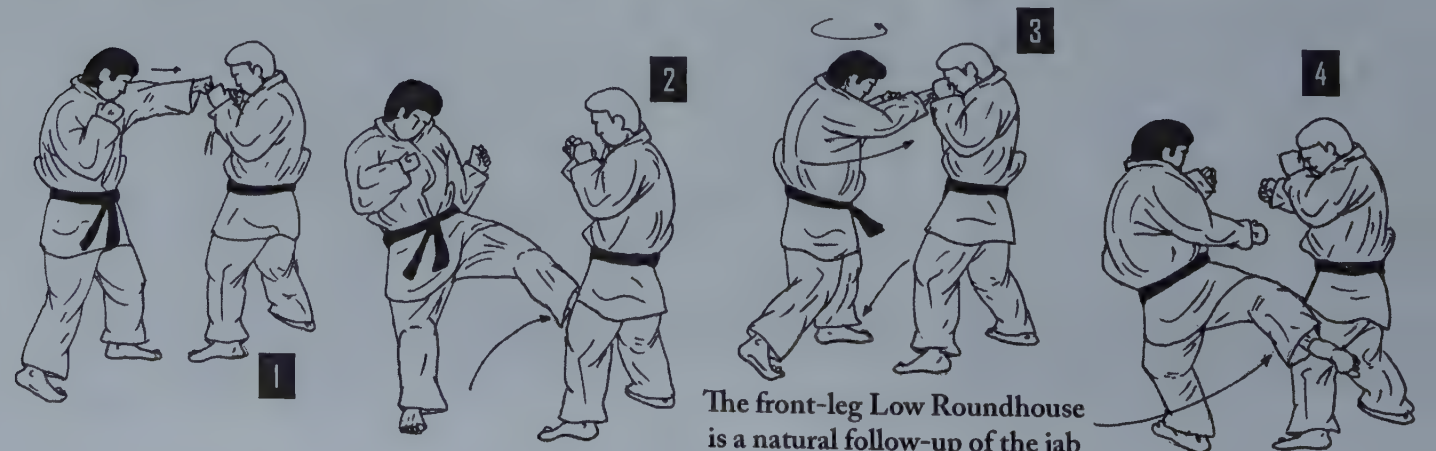
Lift the leg directly towards the assailant's groin while hopping forward

The illustrations below show the already mentioned targeting of the ankle, from both a rear-leg and a front-leg attack, *after feinting high*. This is not a sweep but a painful kick, with the usual added effect of putting the opponent somewhat off-balance. Kick with ball of the foot or the lower tibia (shinbone). Of course, always follow up. This kick, delivered with the lower shin to the side or back of the ankle, is called "*Nias*" by south-American *Shoot* practitioners.

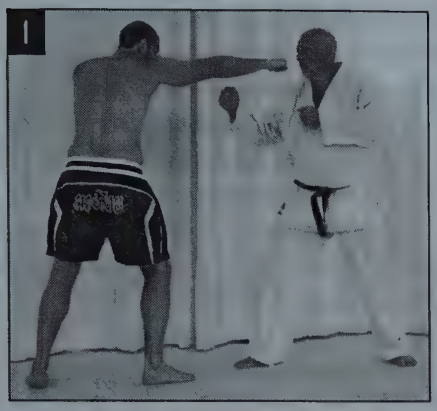
Low rear-leg Roundhouse to outside ankle

Low front-leg Roundhouse to the inside ankle

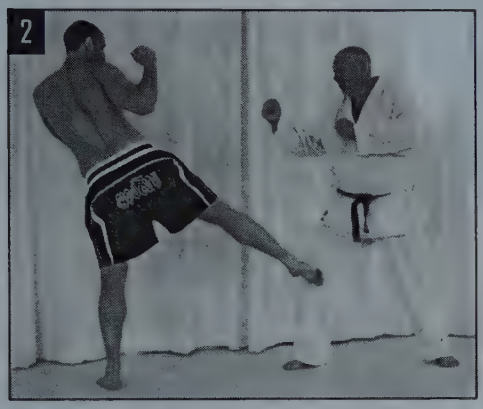
Photo 2 on page 63 shows the kick to the inside thigh, connecting with the ball of the foot. This series shows the use of the fast front-leg variation in a very effective hi/lo/hi/lo combination: Jab and deliver the kick (Front-leg Roundhouse to the inside thigh). Just lift the leg directly into the kick, fast and loose. Lower the leg into a cross punch, which will in turn pull your hip and a Straight-leg Roundhouse to the outside of the same thigh.

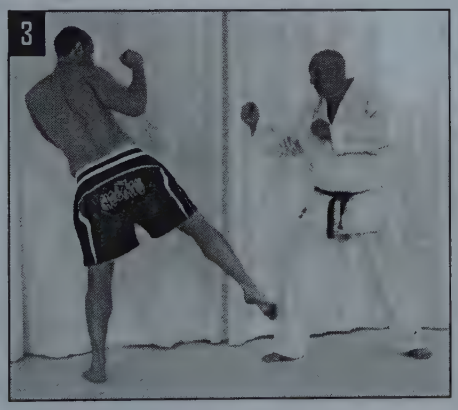


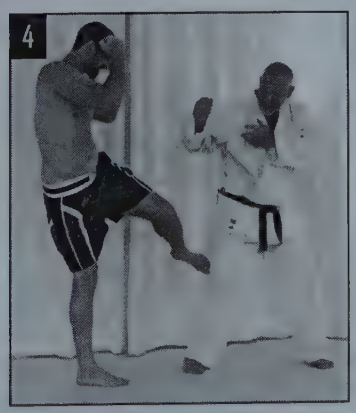
The front-leg Low Roundhouse is a natural follow-up of the jab



The variation without the cross (Reverse Punch) is illustrated here: High jab, low inside toe kick, low outside toe kick.





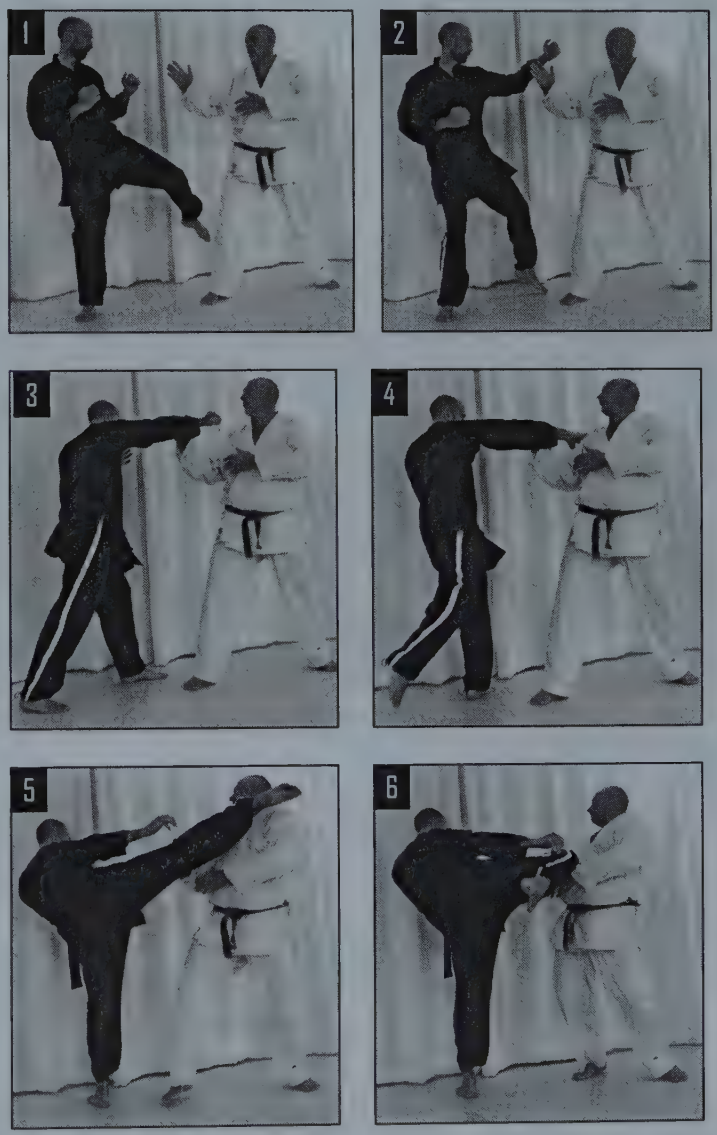


Hi/Lo inside/Lo outside

Specific training

This kick needs to be drilled for speed, not power. Train both the rear-leg and the front-leg versions on the hanging heavy bag.

As mentioned, this kick is fast and a great combination starter. The photos below show a classic combination starting with a fast hopping version of the kick to close the distance to your opponent (The front-leg fast hopping version is clearly illustrated at top left, figures 2 and 3). From opposite stances, chamber the front leg while pushing forward into a hop, and kick your opponent's outer thigh. Your body slightly leans back. As his attention is down, land with a high jab/cross combination, followed by a full-powered rear-leg Full Roundhouse Kick to the head. The rationale behind this application is close to that of Feint Kicks of the *leg taps*-type, whose purpose is just to draw attention down as you punch up.

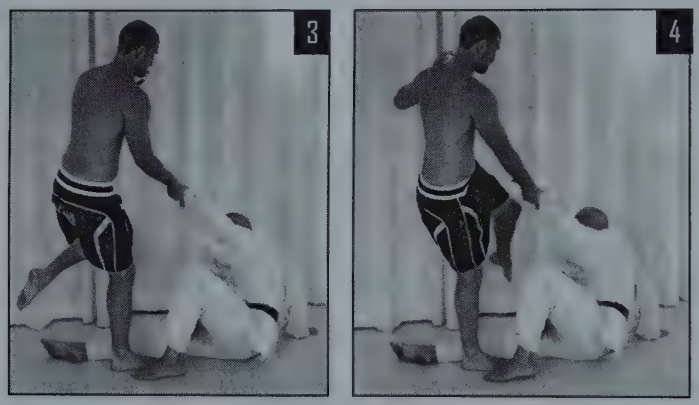


Low Roundhouse Kick as a fast and low misdirection before a classic jab/cross/high Roundhouse

Self defense

The photos below show the use of the kick against a downed opponent. Ideally, you should catch his hand as a diversion and to prevent blocking, releasing it during the delivery of the kick. Remember to chamber back!

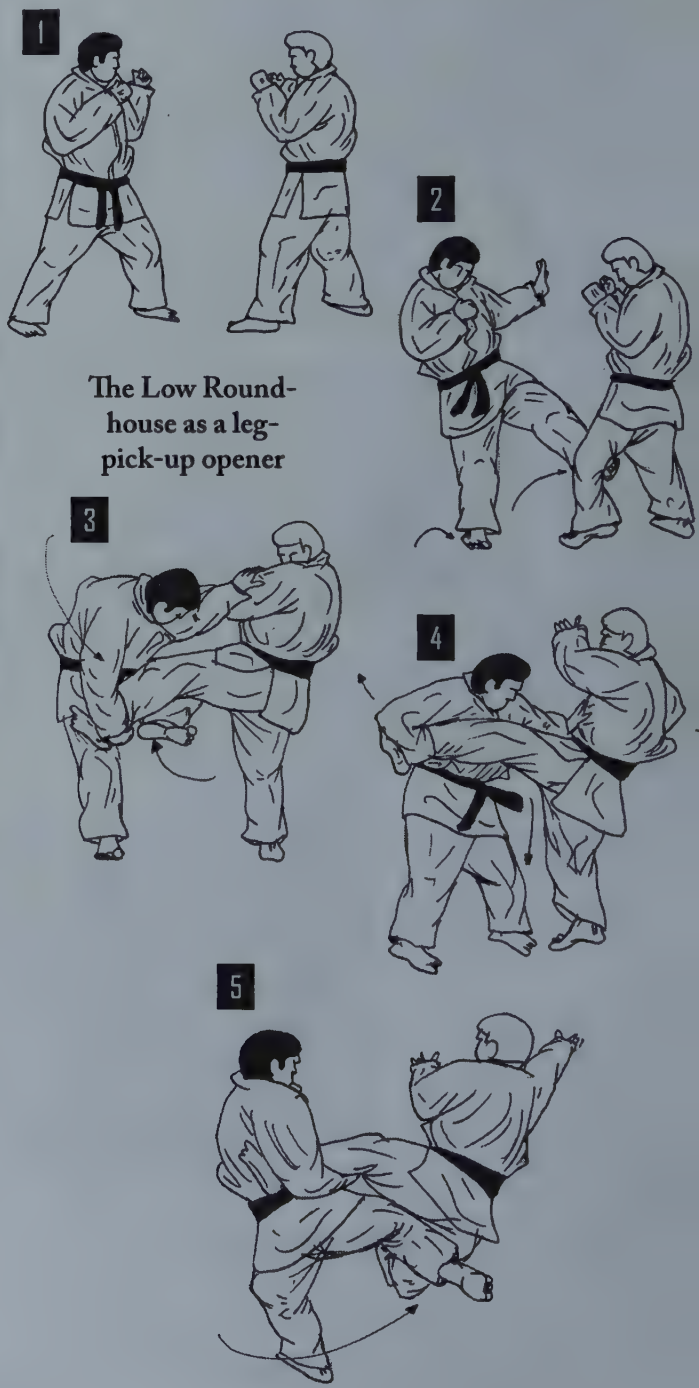
Kick a falling or standing-up opponent, if warranted



Aim at catching his hand while kicking

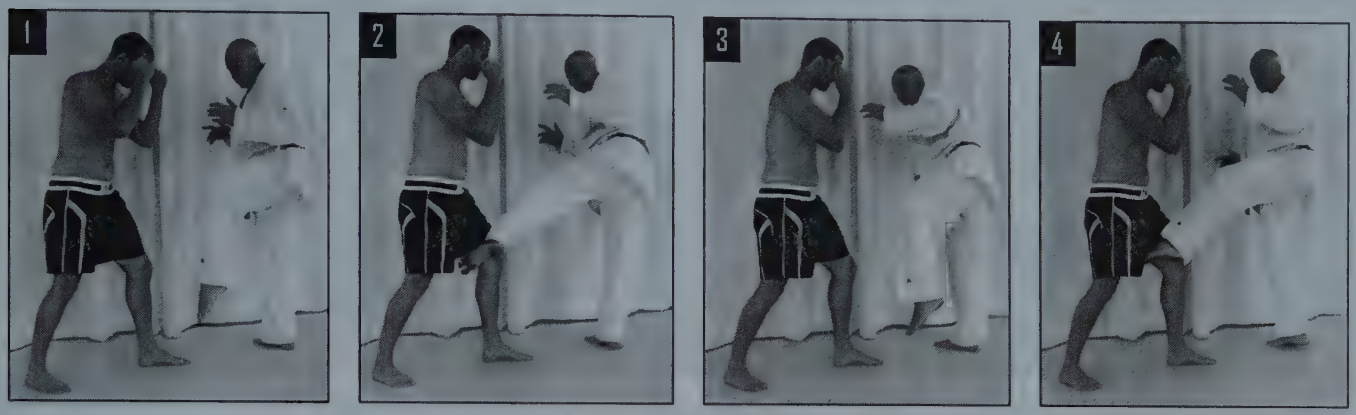
Same maneuver with the other leg

I have underlined the importance of the chamber-back for this kick. But rules often need exceptions. The figures that follow show an interesting special variation of the kick which is used to "catch" and lift your opponent's leg. You deliver the Low Roundhouse from your front leg to your assailant's inside knee, but you do *not* chamber back; instead, you "hook" with your ankle behind his knee, while kicking through and *lifting*. You catch his lifted leg with your rear hand, while keeping him away and under control with your lead hand. You lower your kicking leg and can then kick his standing leg or just push him to the floor. This is a great drill to learn kick sensitivity, and should be practiced regularly by experienced artists.



The Low Roundhouse as a leg-pick-up opener

One of the specific self-defense uses of this kick is described in these photos. Use the kick to open the assailant's legs and set his groin up for a follow-up kick. In this example, you deliver a rear-leg kick to the inside thigh, recoil, and *without lowering the kicking foot*, you deliver a *fast upward* Groin Kick (as described in section 3) from the chambered-back position. If you have difficulties in executing the double kick, you can also lower the kicking foot and let it rebound on the ground for the second kick. This is all about speed; drill for it. This is also a very important drill for general kicking proficiency.



A fast and devastating little double kick

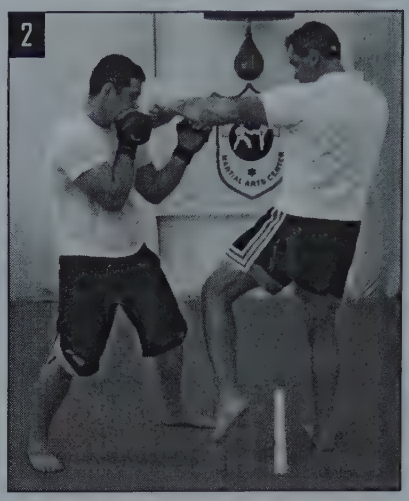
We have mentioned the attrition aspect of the kick and we have shown the use of the kick to the inside-front leg to "open" the opponent. The attack to the inner front leg is very disturbing and it is therefore a great distance closer at the beginning of an offensive combination. This series shows its use to prepare for a MMA "shoot," a two-legs tackle.

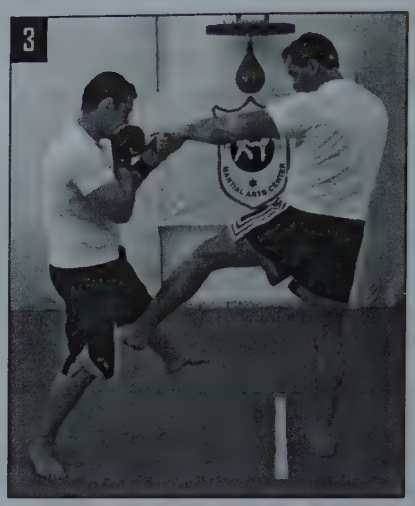
A fast Low Roundhouse to the inside knee will rattle your opponent to allow for your follow-up

Here is a great application of the Low Roundhouse into the inside front knee, in which you commit yourself to a powerful attack and kick *through* the opponent's knee. This time, this is not a prodding or an attrition kick; this is a crippling attack. Your momentum takes you then into a natural spin-back that you conclude with an Essential *Short* Back Kick.

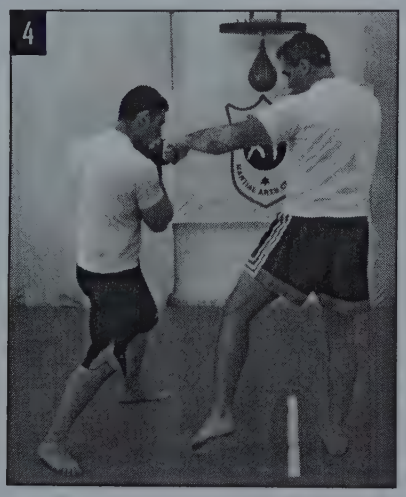
Kick through and let your momentum take you into a spin-back

If one inside-knee Roundhouse works, two should work even better! The photos on this page show the use of two Roundhouse Kicks to the inside legs to prepare for a knee strike.

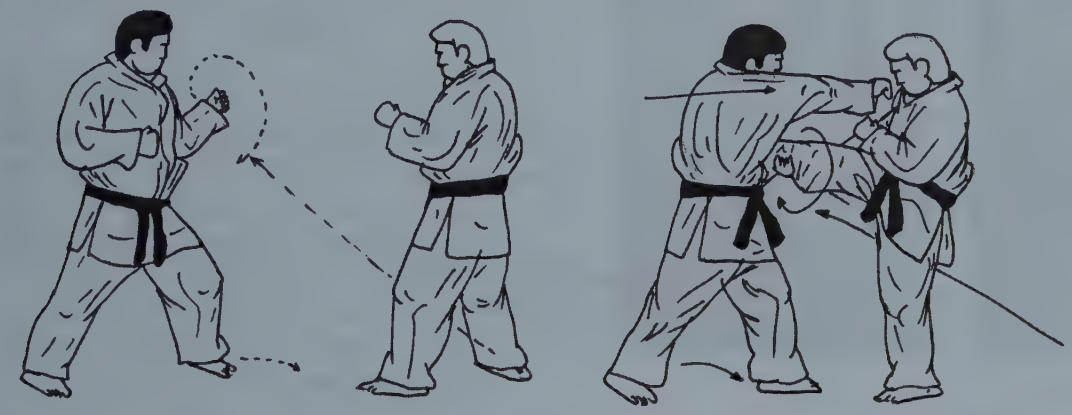




Kick one inside knee, then the other; catch your wobbly opponent's neck for a knee strike

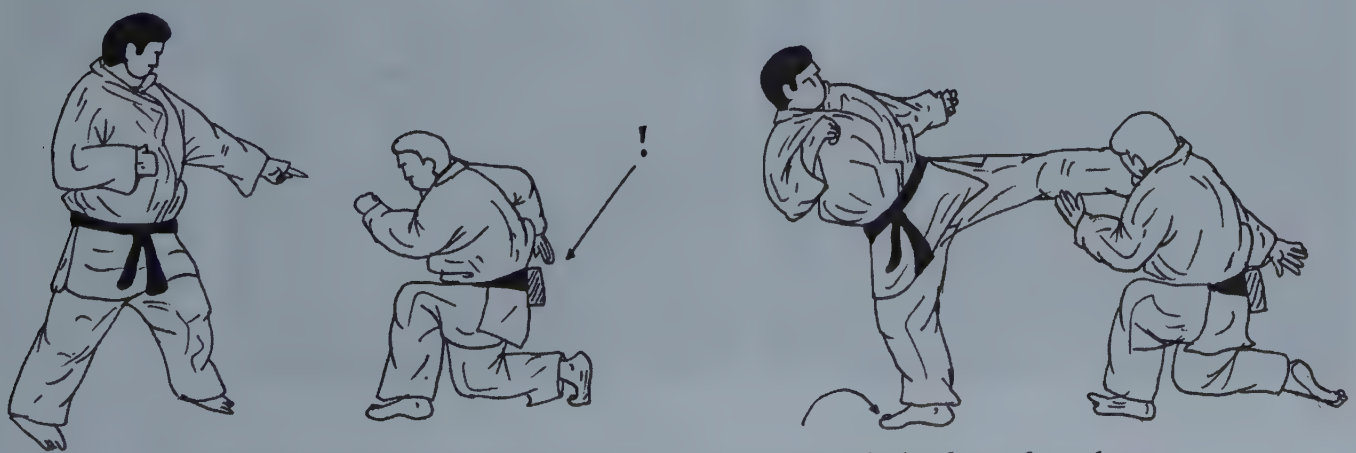


The following figures show the use of the kick in a situation in which you have caught an assailant's kick and held him on one leg. Block his Roundhouse Kick and encircle his leg to hold it firmly from below; simultaneously reverse-punch him in the face. You can then hook-punch the inside thigh you are holding up. Start then to roundhouse-kick the knee of the leg he is standing on with your front leg (the side you are using to hold him). You can throw him down when you decide, either by sweeping his standing leg, lifting his caught-up leg, or with the illustrated joint-damaging knee-over-shoulder takedown. (Be extremely careful in practice!)



A great kick to his knee after you have caught one of his legs

The illustrations below make, to conclude, a very important self-defense point. You have downed your attacker to the ground with a punch, a kick or a take-down. As he starts getting up, you see his hand going for his belt or his pocket, probably reaching for a weapon: a knife, a stick, a gun, a pepper spray or a taser. Do not hesitate, ever. In this case, deliver a Roundhouse Kick to the side of his neck at full power; front-leg or rear-leg as most natural to you. Take no chances, and follow up by stomping his fingers for example, to make him unable to efficiently use a weapon in the near future.

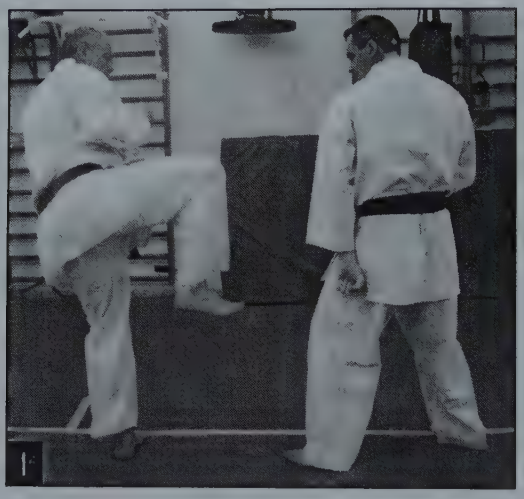


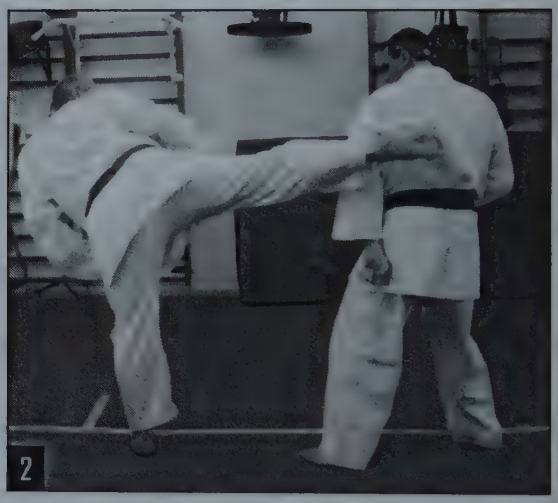
In case you suspect he could be armed, do not hesitate to kick a downed assailant

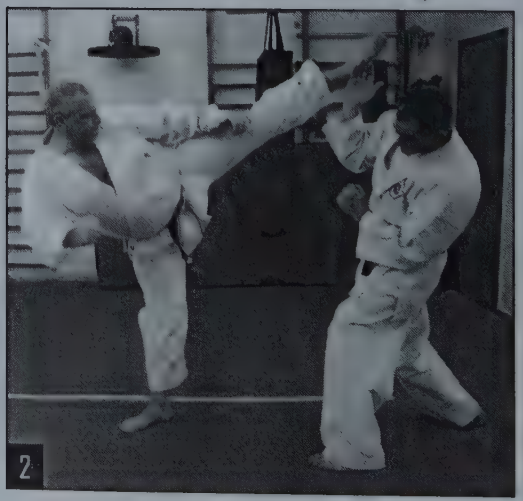
Illustrative photos

The Essential Full Roundhouse Kick

The Essential Small Roundhouse Kick







The Essential Front-leg Hopping Roundhouse Kick

7. The Low Straight-Leg Roundhouse Kick

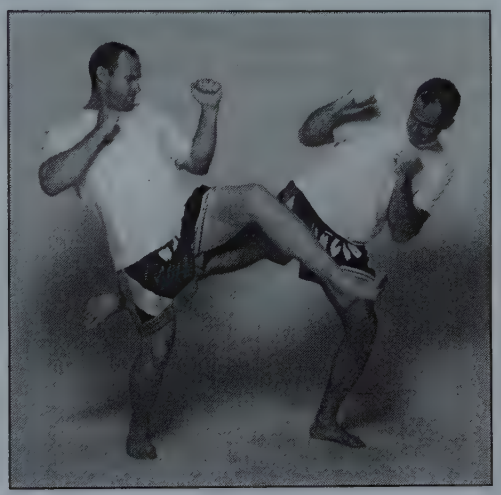
Low kick (Common name), Martelo Baixo (Capoeira), Te Tut (Muay Thai)

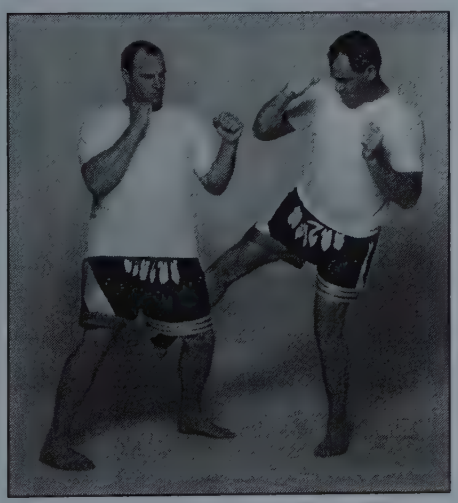
General

One of the best kicks for Self-defense

This is without any doubt the low kick *par excellence*, and that is the way it used to be commonly referred to at the start of the Full-Contact craze of the late Seventies: The Low Kick. This kick is the bread and butter of the full-contact fighting sports, because of its efficacy and the many opportunities in which it can be used. This kick is typical of the hardest of Martial Arts, like *Kyokushinkai Karate* and *Muay Thai* boxing; it is frequently used in MMA and Kickboxing tournaments.

The kick is in fact a basic Essential kick described in detail in previous work, but a book about Low Kicks would certainly be incomplete without it; and so we shall still describe it here again. We still recommend though that you consult our previous book about Essential Kicks for more theory and additional applications.





Various examples of applied "*Low Kicks*"

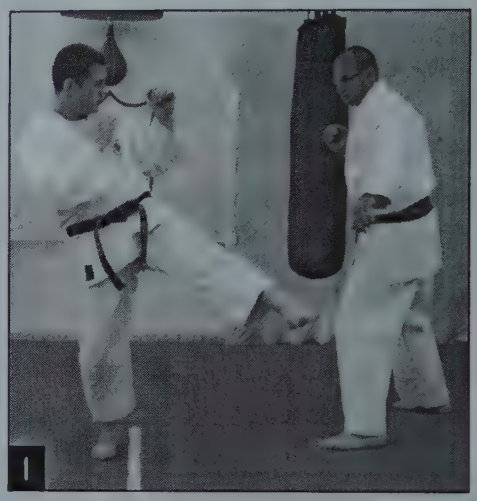
Description

The illustrations on this page describe the execution of the kick: *You first pivot with the shoulders and the hips*, and then only launch the quasi-straight leg directly into the target. In the Muay Thai version of the kick you keep the pivoting momentum and kick through the target to such an extent that, should you miss the target, you would complete a nearly full turn (See photos 1 and 2). In the more controlled version, you would start pivoting back with the shoulders and hips as the leg is released forward.

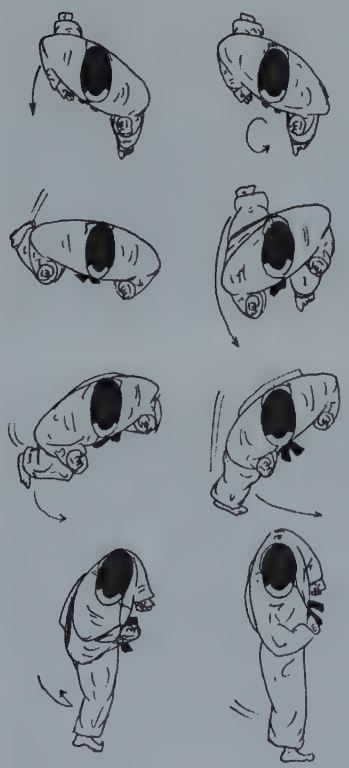
It is generally a rear-leg kick, but, when delivered below the belt, even the front-leg version is powerful enough to inflict serious damage.

You connect with the top of the foot, the front of the ankle or—preferably—the shin. This kick is very important and should be practiced in all possible footwork variations, some of which will be presented here. Note that the kick can also be delivered while leaning back with the upper body, which has sometimes some safety reasons.

The hips pull the kick in



Trade off of the power version: If you miss a kick-through, the momentum can carry you far out



Comparative top view of the straight-leg- and the regular-Roundhouse Kick"

Key points

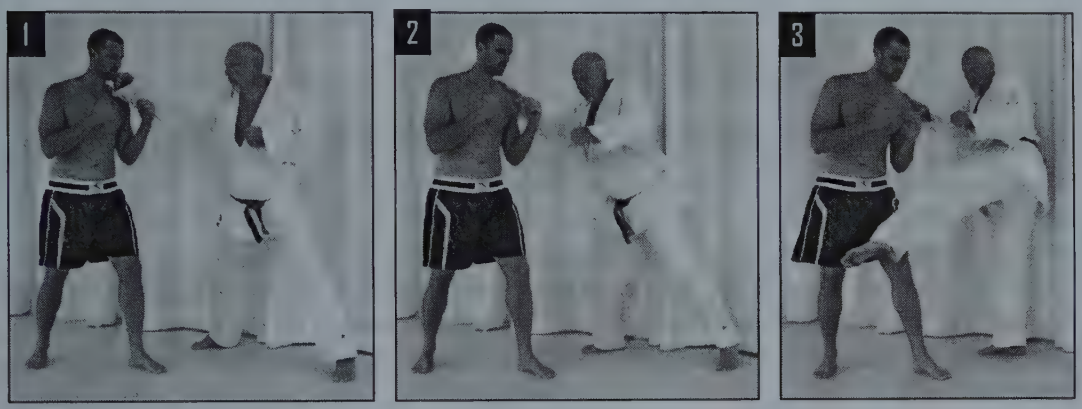
- The power of the kick comes from the hip: The leg is just an extension. Concentrate on kicking with the whole body.
- Keep your guard up
- Always kick *through* the target, for a few inches at least.

Targets

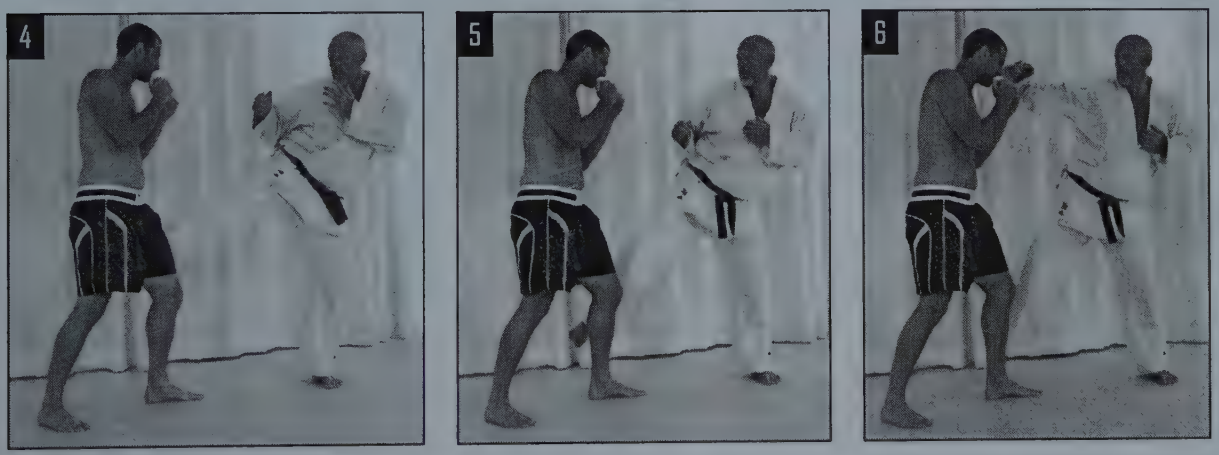
For the purpose of this "Low Kicks" work: Hip, thigh, knee, shin and calf, ankle. But the kick can be used to target very successfully the ribs, the kidneys, the upper back, the neck and the head.

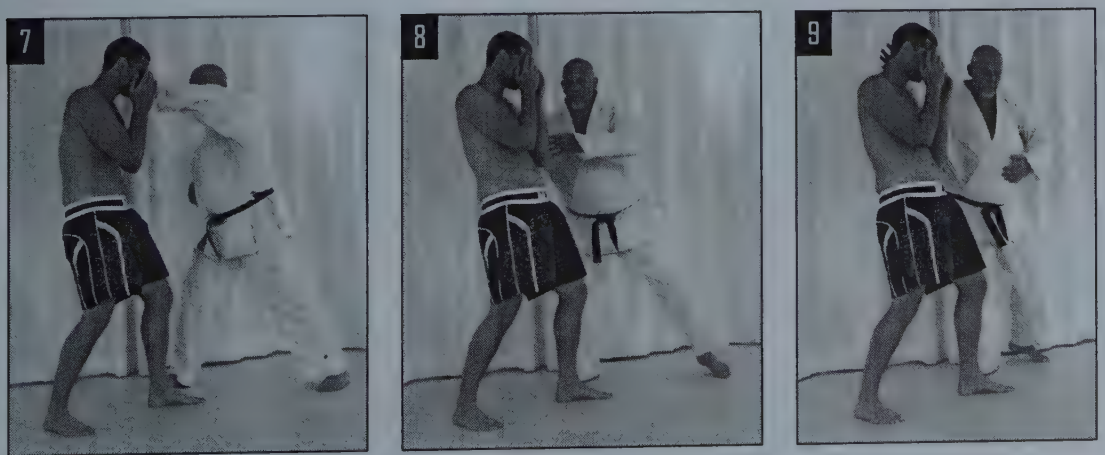
The natural and most natural target is the outside thigh, and many examples will be given.

But the *front* of the thigh is also a valuable target, although it needs some footwork to be put in range, as shown in Photos 1-3. Another example of a very natural combination leading to positioning for a "low kick" to the front of the thigh is in turn presented in Photos 4-9: A first regular Low kick/reverse punch combination, and lowering the foot to the outside, is followed by a jab or lead-hand hook *while pivoting away from the centerline.* (This is a typical *Wadoryu Karatedo* punch called *Nagashi Tsuki*). You are now in perfect position (perpendicular) for a full-powered straight-leg roundhouse to the front of his thigh.



Jab while evading outside and deliver the Roundhouse Kick to the front of the opponent's thigh

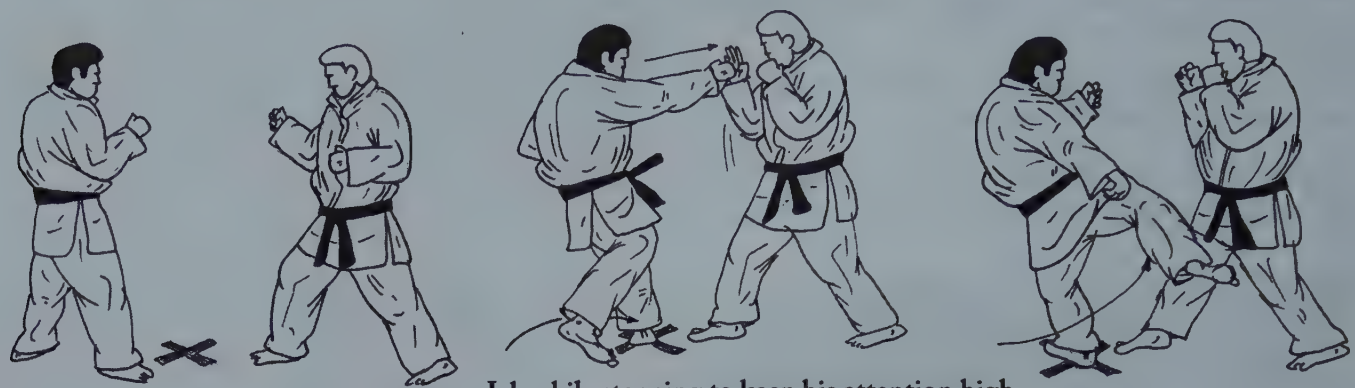




The combination will place you in perfect position for a front-of-the-thigh kick

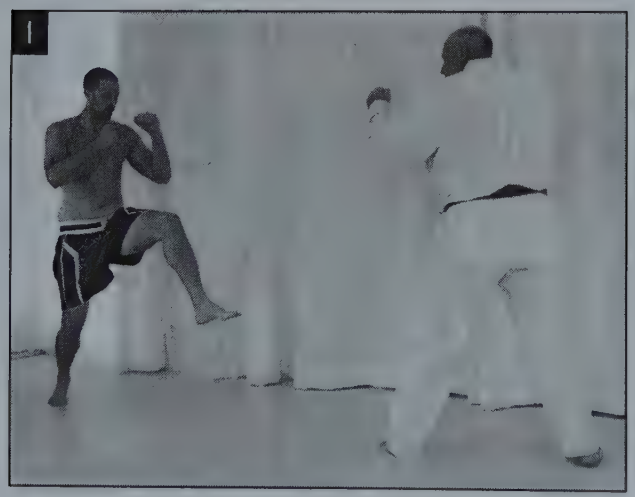
Typical application

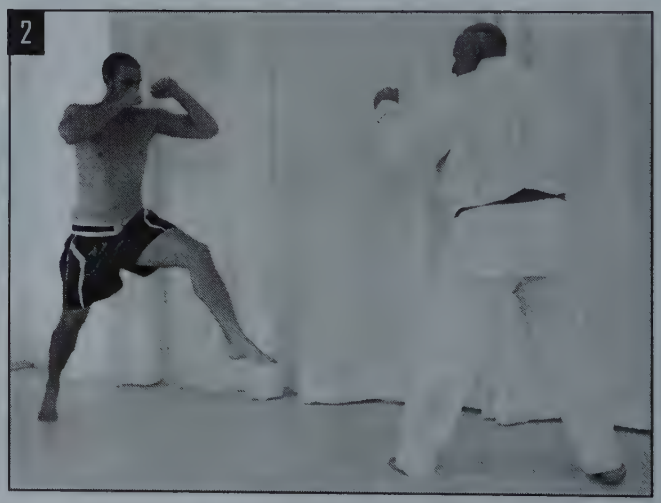
This sequence shows a 'front-leg by forward cross-step' application of the kick, targeting the inner thigh. You jab while cross-stepping (or even hopping), in order to limit his field of vision. Follow up. Simple but effective.



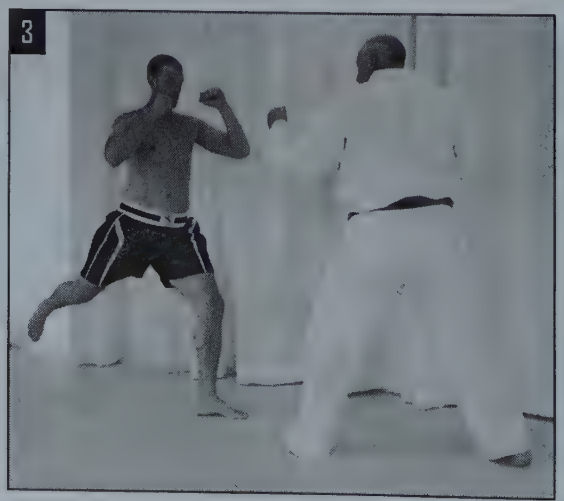
Jab while stepping to keep his attention high

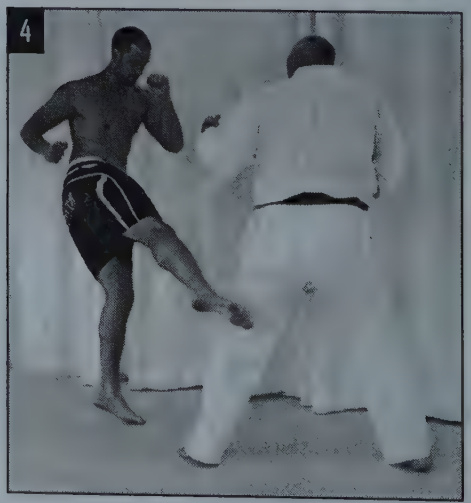
As we mentioned, the kick should be practiced with all possible footwork variations. The photos that follow show a very important variation of the previous cross-step, which is basically *a low-flying "Low kick"*! You lunge with the front leg and kick with the rear leg, but as the switch will happen in mid-air, it is definitely a jumping kick. (The rear leg starts to lift before the front leg lands in position) I recommend drilling this version a lot; trying to gradually increase the distance you cover with the jump. Even if you will not use this kick ever, the drill is great for positioning skills and general kicking proficiency.





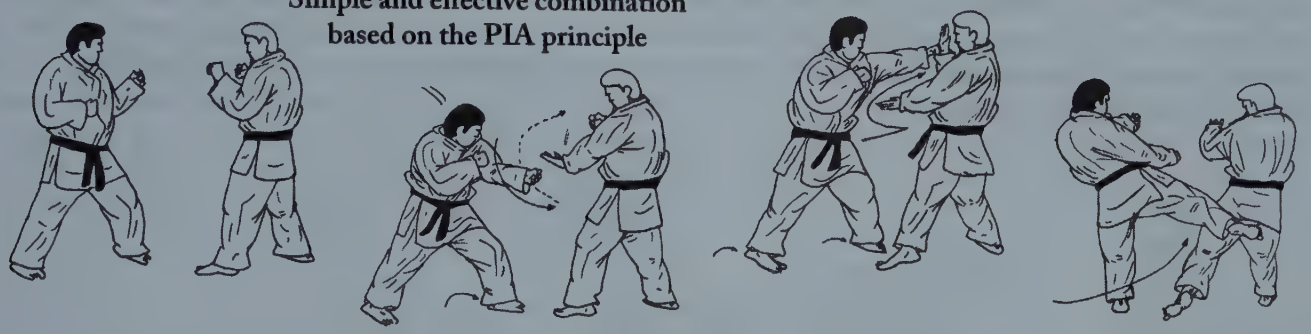
The "flying" Straight-leg Low Roundhouse Kick!





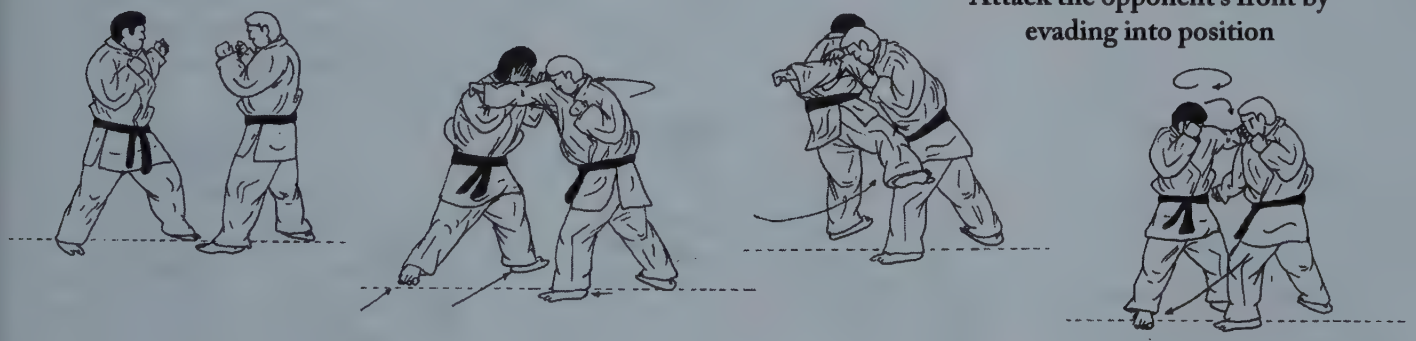
These figures present a classic, very simple and very effective combination opening, based on the Progressive Indirect Attack (PIA) principle, very much touted by *Jeet Kune Do* stylists. You start with an exaggerated jab towards the opponent's groin, the trajectory of which will change as soon as he reacts, and evolve into a high jab towards his eyes. This convoluted hand movement is in fact a cover for the coming rear-leg Straight-leg Roundhouse to the outer thigh. Follow up.

Simple and effective combination based on the PIA principle



The illustrations that follow show the kick delivered from an angled position, resulting in targeting the hip joint or, again, the front of the thigh. This is a very effective kick, and moreover, flows very naturally into a full-hipped hook punch follow-up. As your opponent initiates a high reverse punch (cross), you *slip* to the outside of his arm while controlling or blocking and deliver the rear-leg kick into his hip joint (*Lo*). Lower the leg back *rearwards* in order to gather momentum for a full-powered hook punch to the head (*Hi*).

Attack the opponent's front by evading into position



This sequence shows another angled delivery, this time to the *back* of the leg and from the outside. This variation is presented to illustrate the importance of this kick from nearly all possible situations. As your opponent lifts his arm and so telegraphs his intention to wide-punch, you slide in to catch his neck with your lead hand, while protecting your head with your shoulder. Your opponent's punch should fly over your ducking and tucked head. You then pull his head into an uppercut, and step forward and to the side while keeping the pull on his head. You keep pivoting while pushing him down and away. From this full side position, and in his blind spot, you launch your "Low Kick" to the back of his thigh/knee.

Position yourself for the Low Kick to the back of his legs

These illustrations will present the classic use of the *low kick* on to the *landing* kicking leg of an opponent, and then describe a very important follow-up, based on keeping your opponent off-balance after your kick has connected. The Straight-leg Low Roundhouse Kick is a very powerful maneuver, but it still often needs to be followed up to completion. You evade, block and redirect your opponent's rear-leg Penetrating Front Kick in order to find yourself on his outside. As he lands, you deliver a full-hipped straight leg roundhouse to the back of his thigh and grab his shoulder. You lower your kicking leg and pivot on it for half-a-circle, while *violently* pulling him down and around and keeping him off-balance. You then deliver a roundhouse kick with the other leg to his head which should be coming your way. If you are flexible enough, this can also be a more devastating Straight-leg high Roundhouse, something of a "high Low-Kick".

After a successful Low Kick, grab your opponent and pull him off-balance for more kicking

Specific training

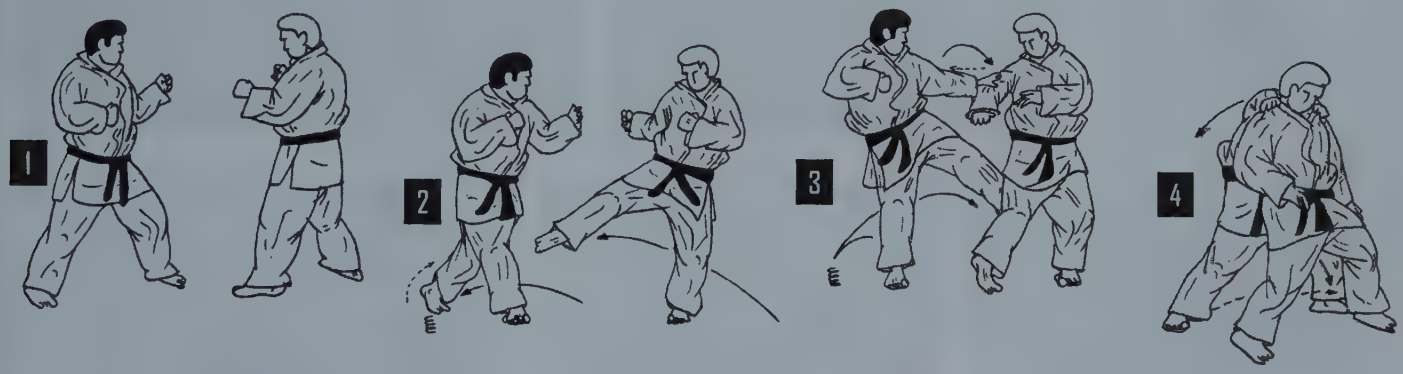
The Straight-leg Roundhouse should be drilled all the time and in all possible ways: hanging bag, standing bag, tire, protected sparring, and more. It should be drilled for speed and power. When drilling, always keep in mind the kicking *through* the target.

Power is important for this kick and general power training is important to its success: PLYO-FLEX Training is highly recommended for explosive power development.

Self defense

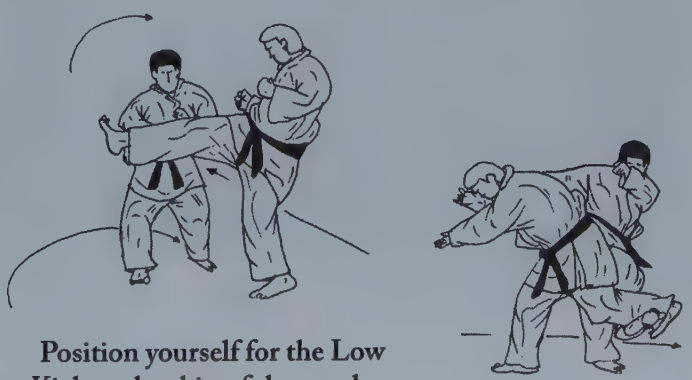
The *Low Kick* is of course a great kick for self-defense: It is especially devastating against an untrained opponent who is not used to being hit powerfully.

These figures show the use of the kick against *a low kick itself.* As your assailant attempts to kick your front leg, pull the leg back, just enough, while keeping your body weight on your rear leg. Let your leg *rebound* and launch your own Straight-leg Roundhouse to the outside of his landing leg, while grabbing his upper arm or shoulder. Pull him forward as you land behind him, and use your other leg to deliver a second Straight-leg Roundhouse to the calf of his other leg. This has the added effect of sweeping his front leg and make him fall down. You can meet his falling head with an Essential Hook Kick (illustrated) or Outside Crescent Kick from the same kicking leg. You could still follow up with another Roundhouse, to the head for example.



Low Kick vs. Low Kick. Then low-kick!

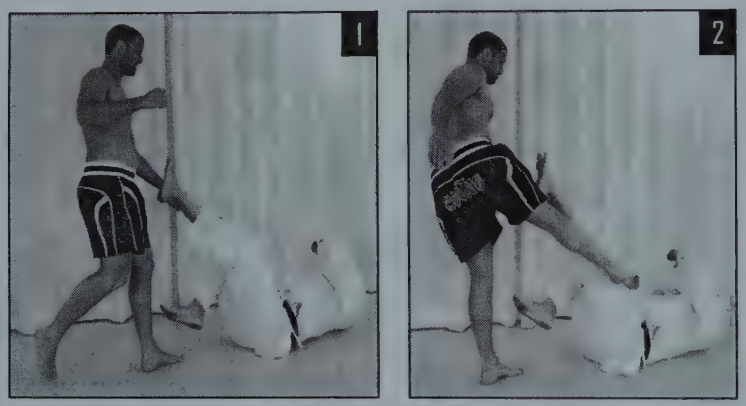
A variation on this theme is presented here: a Low Kick to the front shin/ankle of the rear leg will be extremely painful and will cause a front fall! We shall present it in a tactically interesting application against an aggressive kicker. In a same-as-your-opponent stance, you feint with the upper body to "invite" the rear-leg Penetrating Front Kick of your opponent. But as soon as he starts his move you evade aggressively to the left in a full 90 degrees *Tai Sabaki.* As he lands, deliver the low Roundhouse to his ankle (It is a kick, not a sweep!) and follow up as he lands on his face.



Position yourself for the Low Kick to the shin of the rear leg: painful takedown

The example presented below is in the same vein and is, again, not to be confused with a sweep. The Low Roundhouse *Sweep* is presented in Section 8, coming next. Here we have a kick resulting in a very nasty fall, but still a kick and not a sweep. We will present a self-defense application against a knee-in-the-lower-back rear choke. But note that this kick variation is valid for any situation in which you catch your opponent's leg from the inside. When attacked with said rear choke and knee-in-back, you immediately take hold of the choking arm to relieve pressure, while pivoting strongly with a low block (*Gedan Barai – Karatedo*) to the knee in your back that turns into a scooping catch. The "block" is to be considered as an attack onto your opponent's limb, as always in Shotokan Karate: It is a painful strike to the side of the knee. You complete your pivot while lifting your assailant's knee and find yourself in position for a full-powered Straight Leg Roundhouse to *the front* of the knee of his standing leg. On top of the damage to his knee, this will result in a difficult-to-control and hard fall on his face. Follow up as he falls, by stomping his ankle for example.

Low Kick to the front of a standing leg hurts and causes a nasty fall



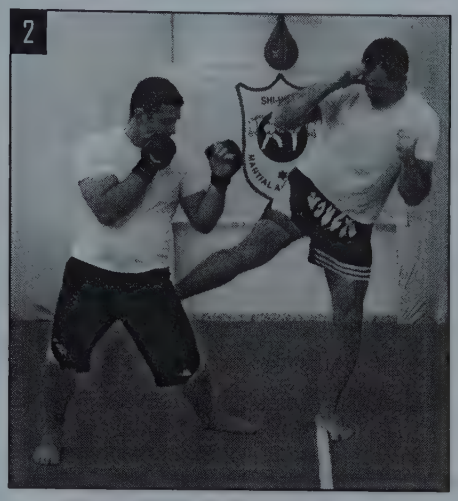
The photos at left show a great application against the downed opponent: You get hold of one ankle and low-kick his outside thigh. This is an attrition kick: keep kicking, always going back out after each kick to assess the situation.

Catch the ankle of a downed opponent and kick his thigh repeatedly

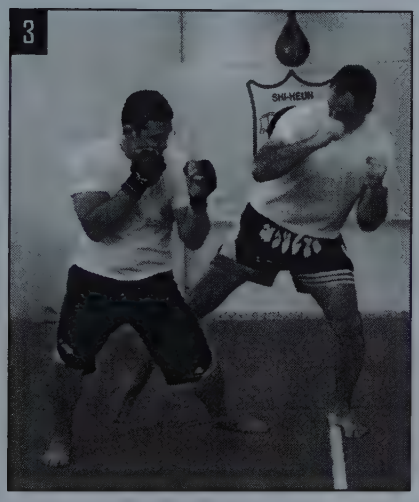
The figures below show another example against a *Low Kick* attack: If you do not have time to evade and pull your leg back, you must lift your leg to intercept the kick on the fleshy side of your shin, in order to minimize the damage, in a classic leg-block. Lower the leg while punching him to the face or the body, as per his guard, and immediately launch a rear-leg kick to his inside thigh; if possible while grabbing his front upper arm. Follow up, for example with another *Low Kick* from your other leg, to the outside of his front leg this time. Follow up more.

Two Low Kicks as a response to a leg-blocked Low Kick

Note that a natural follow-up of a successful Straight-leg Roundhouse into the outer thigh of your opponent would be a classic Scoop throw (*Sukui Nage – Judo*). The set-up is shown below.



The "Low Kick" is ideally followed up by *Judo's Sukui Nage*

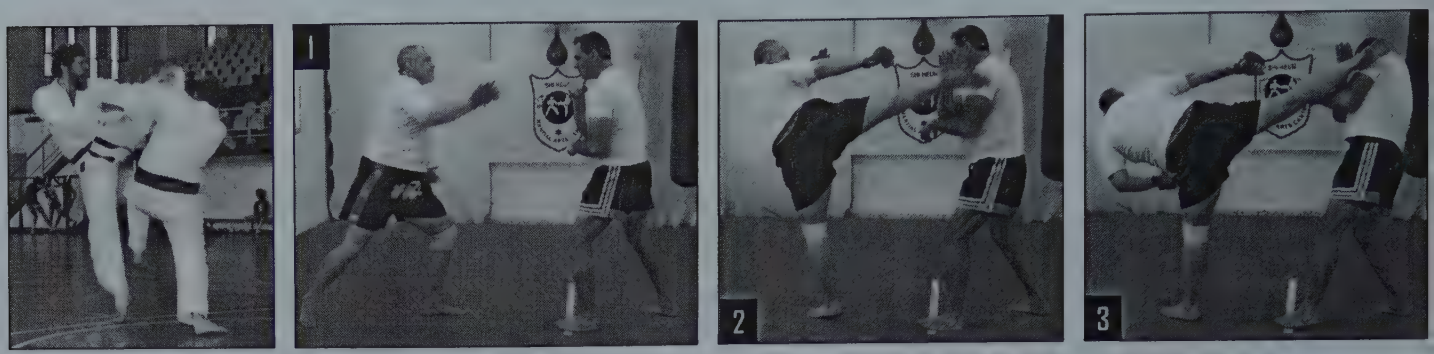


And last but not least, let us remind the reader that the Straight-leg Roundhouse is a variation of the Roundhouse Kick. Just like the regular low Roundhouse, the Straight-leg version is effective, and even more so, as a "cutting" kick. It will deliver an even harder kick to the standing knee or leg of your kicking assailant. This series shows such an application.

Block and catch the kick; low-kick the standing leg with everything you have

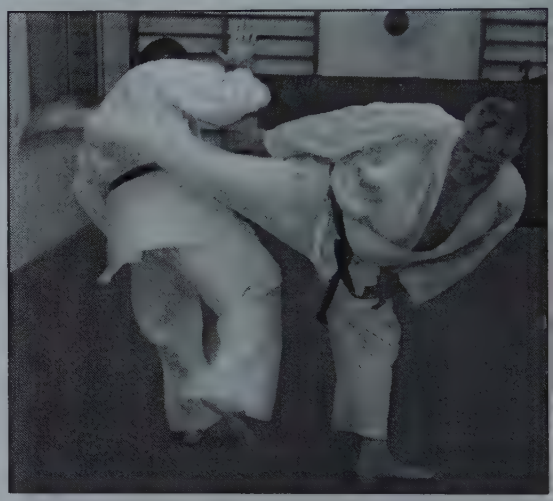
Illustrative photos

The Straight-leg Roundhouse Kick is an Essential basic kick; it is generally a low kick, but it can be delivered at high or mid-level as well.

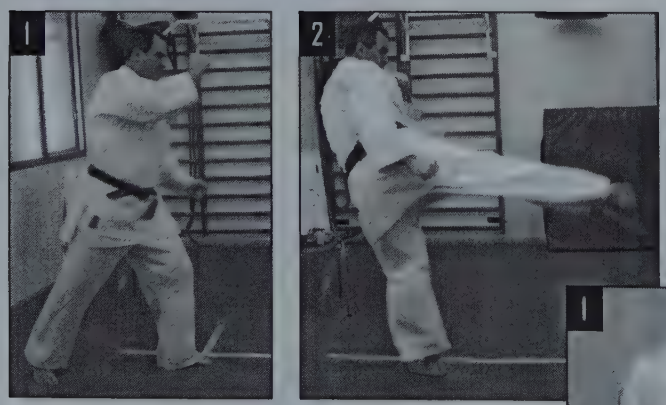


The *high* Straight-leg Roundhouse in tournament and in training (*Marc De Bremaeker*)

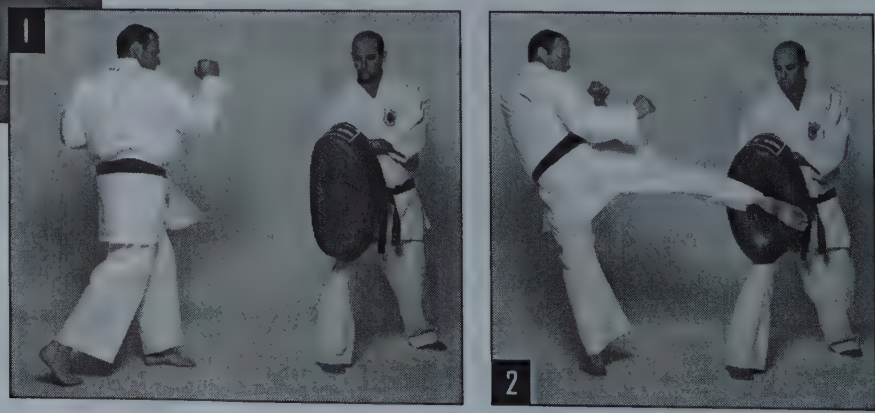
The classic Essential Straight-leg Roundhouse to the inside knee (*Ziv Faige*)



Low Kick as a cutting kick in free fighting (*Roy Faige*)



Remember that the upper body and the hips pull the kick in for extra power

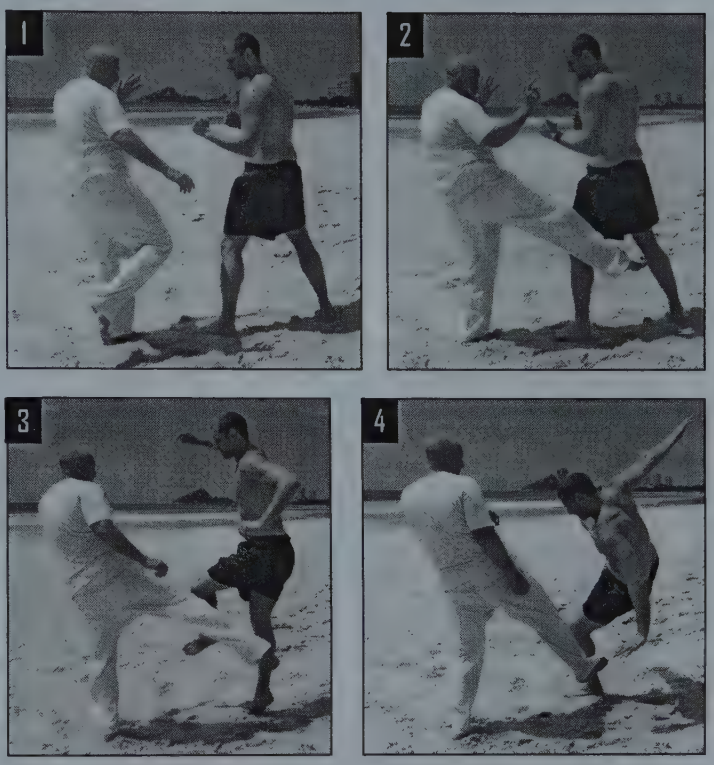


8. The Low Straight-Leg Roundhouse Sweep

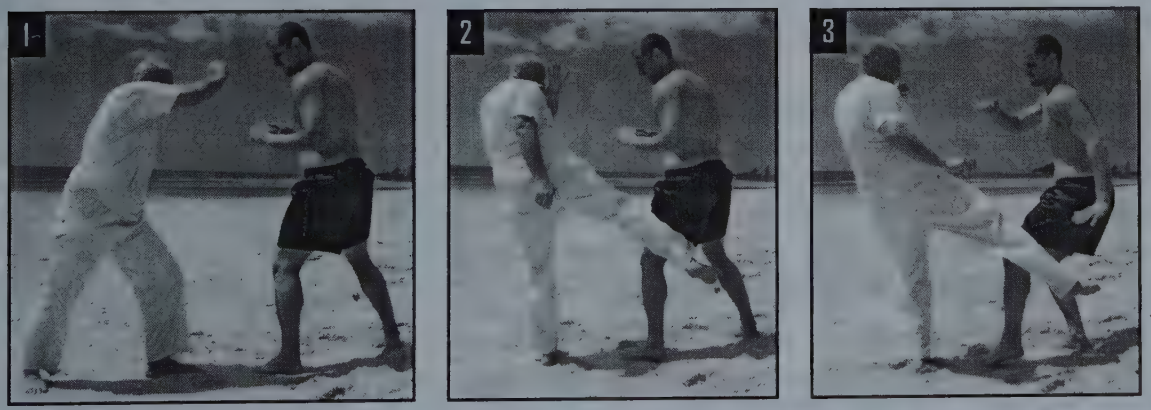
Banda (Capoeira), Gedan Mawashi Barai (Karatedo)

General

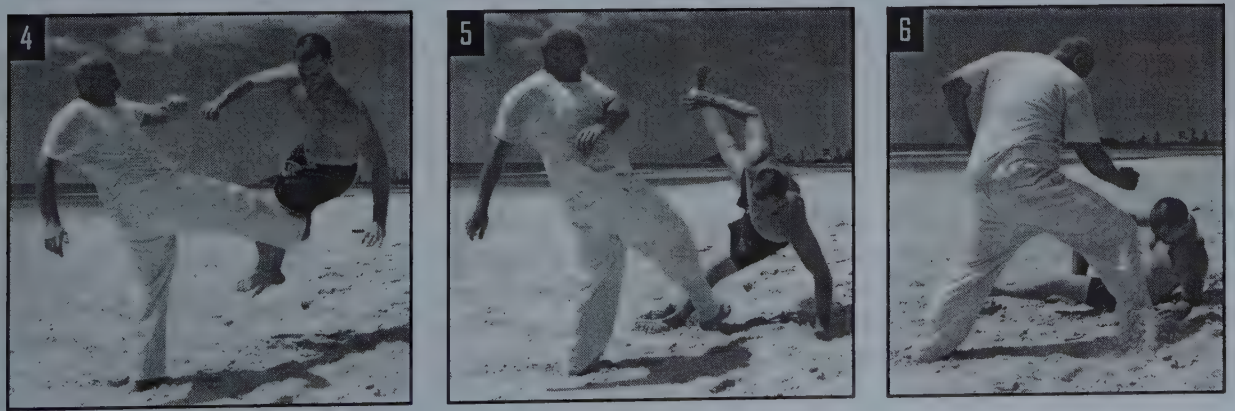
This is a *variation* of the Straight-leg Roundhouse Kick that we wanted to present separately, as the delivery is slightly different in its emphasis. The purpose of this kick is to cause the opponent to fall down, but it is a painful kick first and a sweep only second. The felling of an opponent is of great psychological importance in a fight: Even if the technique is not a decision maker, the fact that at the end of your kick the opponent lands on the floor will hurt his self-confidence for the rest of the engagement. This kick is very much in use in *Kyokushinkai Karate* fighting, and in many other arts in some form or the other. The preferred use of the kick will always be as a "cutting" kick, i.e. kicking the standing leg of a kicking opponent, but, with good training, it is easy to perform on an adversary standing on both legs.

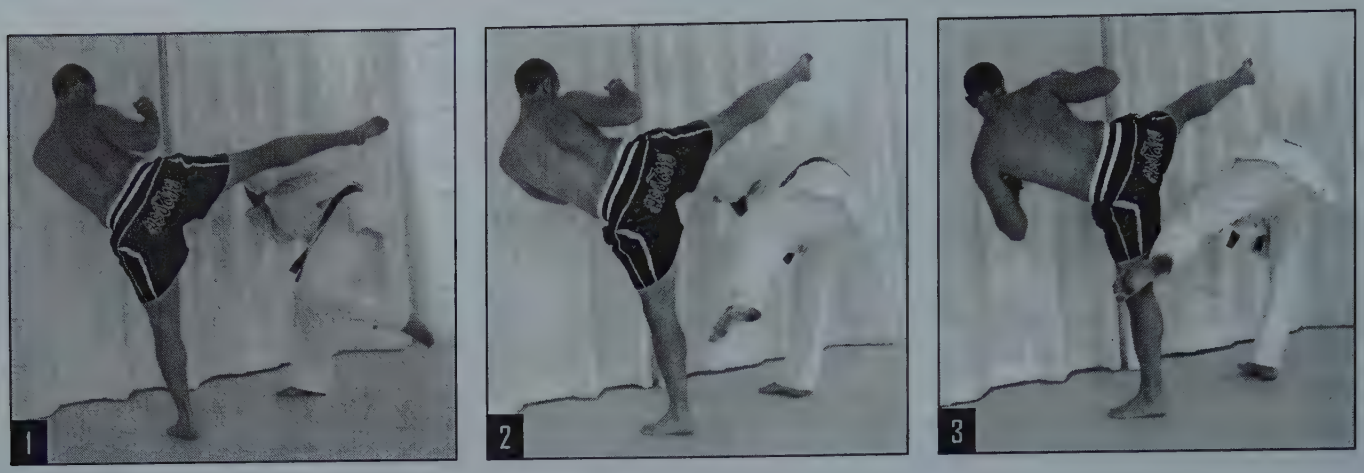


The Straight-leg Roundhouse one-leg Sweep Kick



The Straight-leg Roundhouse two-legs Sweep Kick





Rear-leg "cutting" version of the kick

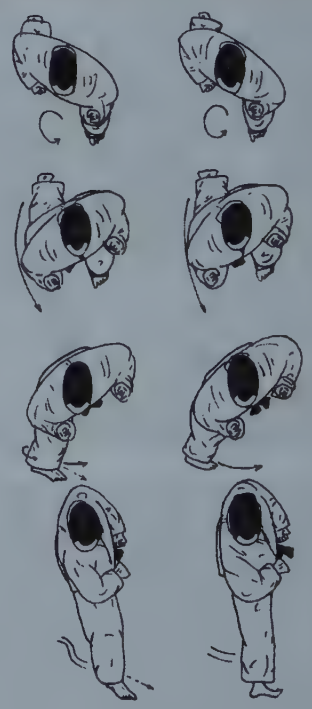
Front-leg "cutting" version of the kick

Description

"Cutting" kicks are technically easier to perform and a regular Straight-leg Roundhouse to the standing leg will be enough to provoke a fall. But as a takedown, it is better to perform them in the more classic way we shall describe here: Kick the side/back thigh in a slightly upwards direction. The illustration at right shows a comparative top view of the (diagonally upward) Sweep Kick and a regular (horizontal) Straight-leg Low Roundhouse Kick.

The kick has all the attributes of the regular Straight-leg Roundhouse, with the hip twist and full commitment, but the trajectory, especially after impact is slightly up, in order to bend the leg at the knee while lifting it. Of course this kick is a fully committed "kick-through" move aiming for another half-meter *through* the leg.

These kicks may seem like wishful thinking to some. The author wants to assure the dubious reader that these are pretty easy techniques to score with when mastered, and they were some of my favorites at a certain time in my sporting career. The key is timing and, of course, parsimonious and judicious use. The "Low Kick Sweep" works best on opponents that will react backwards to a forward lunge, by closing their stance, elevating their center of gravity and starting the legs moving in a direction your kick will accelerate. A lot of drilling is necessary to develop the "feel" of the kick, especially in free-fighting training, but the result is worth the effort.



This top view shows that the kick is very much a hybrid between low Straight-leg Roundhouse- and Front- Kicks

The figures below show the delivery of the kick to the front leg, after a jab to provoke some leg movement on his part. It is imperative to aim precisely at the upper side of the knee, and then kick up and through. Always follow up while he lands down.

Single-leg kick takedown. Follow up.

This series shows the same kick delivered to both legs, when your jab has caused him to close his stance more. Aim to the same spot of his front leg, but with your upper shin this time. Kick through with the hips.

The two-legs kick takedown: great against a "runner"

Key points

- Fully committed kick only: kick at least half a meter through the leg.
- Strike the side or back of the leg only, at upper knee/lower thigh level.
- The sweep kick will not work as a takedown on a low-stance stationary opponent. The purpose of the jab is to cause the start of a slight retreat that "liberates" the foot from the floor.
- Keep your guard up, and always follow up.

Targets

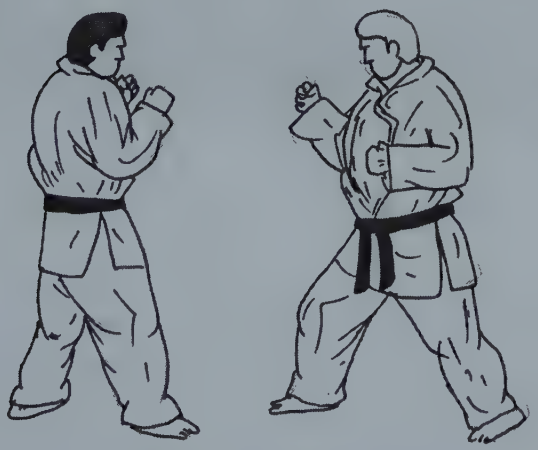
Very specifically the side and back of the knee.

Typical application

As mentioned, the typical application of these kicks—besides the straight orthodox use presented above—is as "cutting" kicks. As the kicks are nearly simultaneous, the general idea is to kick in a position that allows you to "smother" the incoming kick while delivering yours. As you attack his standing leg, you will certainly jam his delivery and weaken his kick; but make sure you cover yourself with your arm or shoulder.

The set of illustrations below show an unorthodox *front-leg* application against a Roundhouse Kick: Lean back and control the incoming Roundhouse by buffering it with your shoulder or opposite hand, while delivering your own Straight-leg Roundhouse Sweep Kick to his standing leg. Remember to kick through and up. You can also hop slightly forward during delivery to further jam his expected range.

The series at left shows the same technique delivered with the *rear* leg. This one will work better if you start with a small angling lunge to his inside.

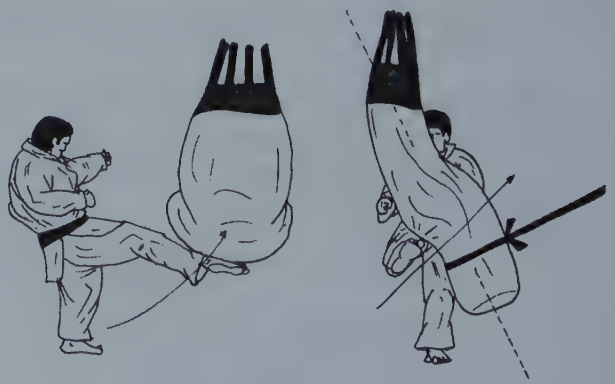


Front-leg cutting Kick

Angling rear-leg cutting Kick

Specific training

The upward angle and powerful kick-through aspects of this specific kick must be drilled on a heavy bag hanging with bottom just at knee level, or on a long bag held diagonally by a partner or a belt. The figures below show how you must try to lift and displace the bag up and laterally with your kick; but no pushing, just *kicking*!



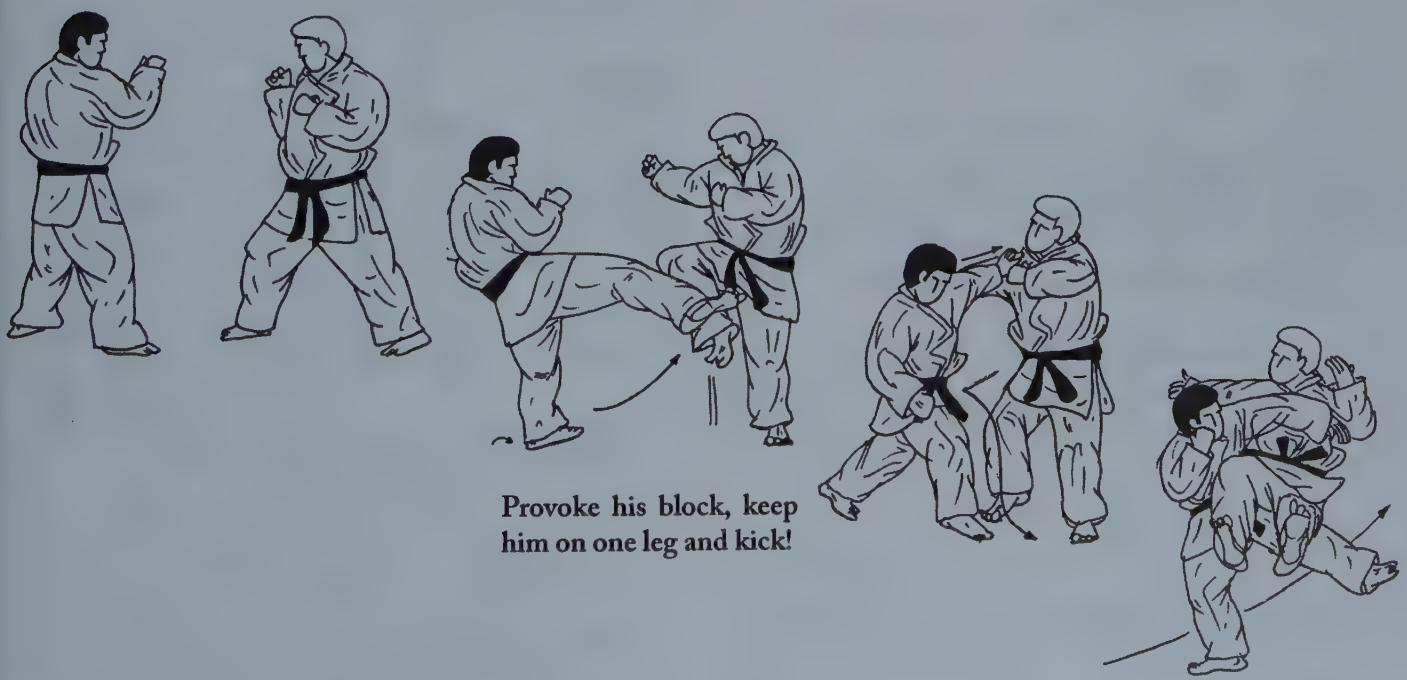
Kick diagonally up. A low-hanging fat bag or a obliquely-held long bag will suit the purpose

Self defense

The illustrations below show an aggressive and highly practical version of the cutting kick against a rear-leg Roundhouse Kick from opposite stances. The kick is following a timing-stop punch, which is sometimes a safer tactic. The maneuver will work especially well if you have conditioned your opponent with a few retreats from his rear-leg Roundhouse. You then suddenly stop-reverse-punch him in the middle of his kick development, eventually evading out a bit. The reverse punch has the added benefit of pushing him even more off-balance, still with his kicking leg in the air. The rear-leg Straight-leg Roundhouse Sweep Kick to the knee of his standing leg will both damage his joint and take him down harshly.

Timing stop-punch/kick against a rear-leg Roundhouse

This sequence shows a very typical *Kyokushinkai* technique, where leg blocks of low kicks are commonplace: Kick his *rear* leg after having caused him to lift his front leg! Throw a front leg *Low Kick* towards his inner upper thigh or groin to cause him to block by lifting the front leg. Immediately land deeply forward while controlling his front hand from the inside, and push back to keep him on his rear leg. Extend your hand forward against his chest and push back more while you deliver the Straight-leg Roundhouse Sweep Kick to the back of his rear leg. Follow up, with an Essential Downward Heel Kick for example.



Provoke his block, keep him on one leg and kick!

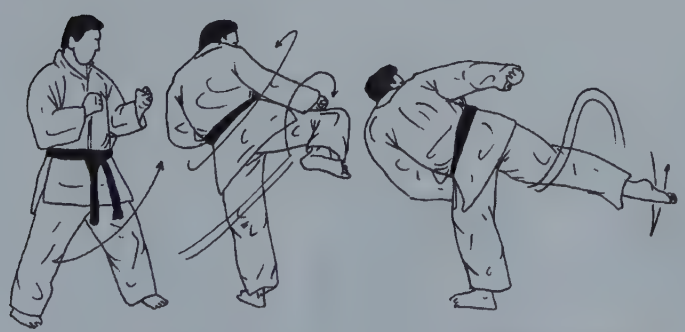
9. The Low Downward Roundhouse Kick

General

This is, again, an Essential basic kick, as described in previous work, but delivered to a low target. The parent kick is a surprising technique to attack the head from above, fantastic for point tournaments or a combination start in full-contact sports. The *low* version of the kick—the trajectory of which makes it *unsuitable* to attack knees and thighs—will generally be used only on a grounded, kneeling or bending opponent. It is an interesting kick though, and very effective in those special situations. This low version is relatively common in Indonesian styles, known for their fierce and realistic maneuvers.

Description

Please refer to my previous book for a more in-depth analysis of the classic version of the Essential kick. In the low kick version, the chambering is lower and less pronounced, but the principles stay the same. See below: Chamber the leg as you would a *Full* Roundhouse Kick, and then keep pivoting until you have half your back towards the opponent. Extend the leg down, through the target, and chamber back.



Exaggerate the twist of the Roundhouse chamber and kick down

Targets

Mostly the head and the back of the neck. Between the shoulder blades and the clavicles are also worthy targets.

Key points

- This is a snap kick, whipping in and out: You must kick a few inches into the target, but then immediately forcefully chamber back.
- Connect with ball of foot, upper foot, ankle or lower shin.
- Turn the hips fully before you connect.

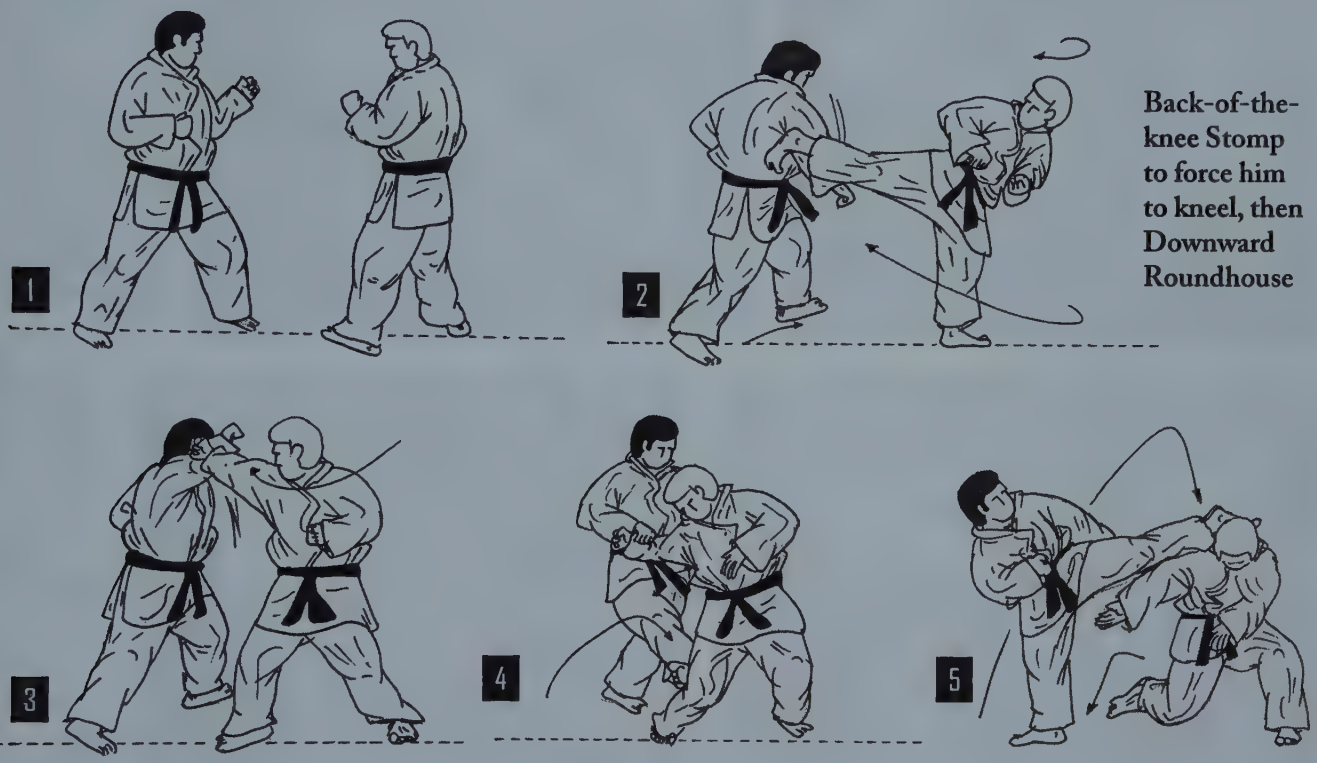
Typical application

As mentioned, this kick is mainly applicable to a leaning or kneeling opponent.

The illustration below shows a very practical application of the kick as a follow-up to a successful groin or solar plexus attack. Your first kick has connected with his groin and caused him to bend forward in pain. Lower your leg and deliver a downward roundhouse with your other leg, to the back of his exposed neck. The back of the neck is a sensitive target and the kick is potentially very dangerous. Caution is warranted!

A great combination for self-defense: Groin Kick and Downward Roundhouse when he bends over from pain

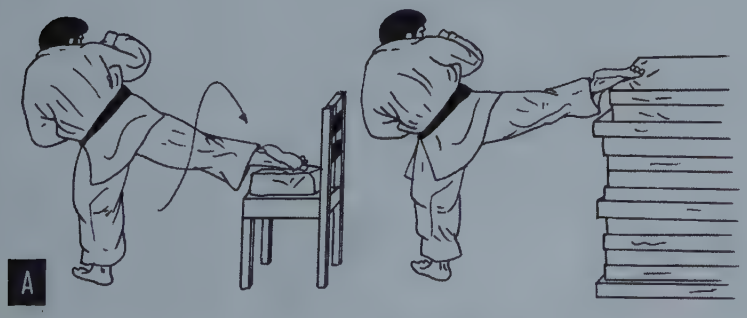
The illustrations that follow show the other classic practical application of the kick: A follow-up to a back-of-the-knee attack. In this example, you block your opponent Spin-back Back kick/Back-fist combo by evading to his outside. Control his hand while delivering an Outside-tilted Heel Stomp Kick to the back of his knee. As he falls on his knee and crumples forward, deliver your Downward Roundhouse to the back of his neck.



Back-of-the-knee Stomp to force him to kneel, then Downward Roundhouse

Specific training

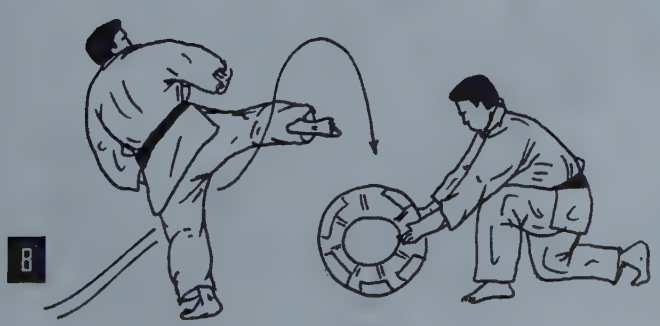
Make sure you drill the kick at different heights. Drill the kick on a standing bag, a lying bag, a focus pad on a chair, a pile of judo mats or a tire held by a partner.

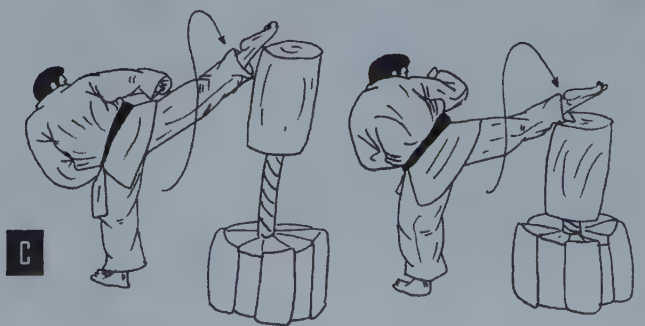


A. A focus pad on a chair and a pile of training mats will make great targets at different heights

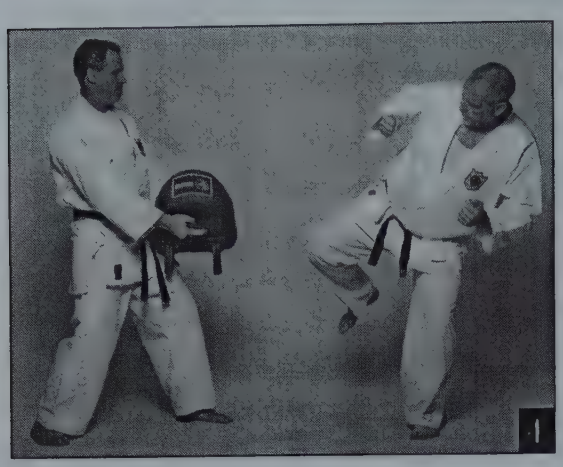
B. The old tire is always a great drilling tool

C. Drill at all heights on the standing bag

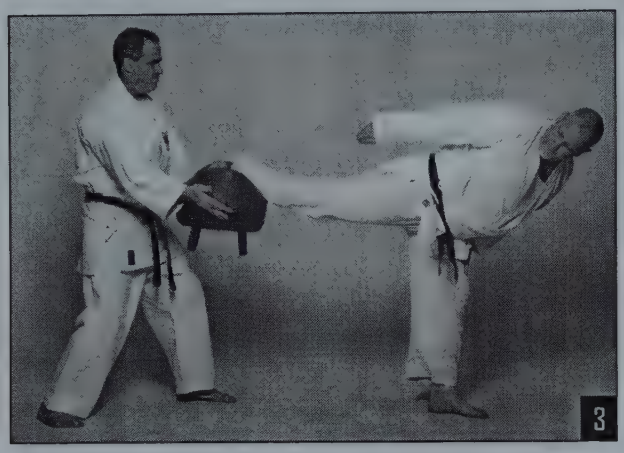


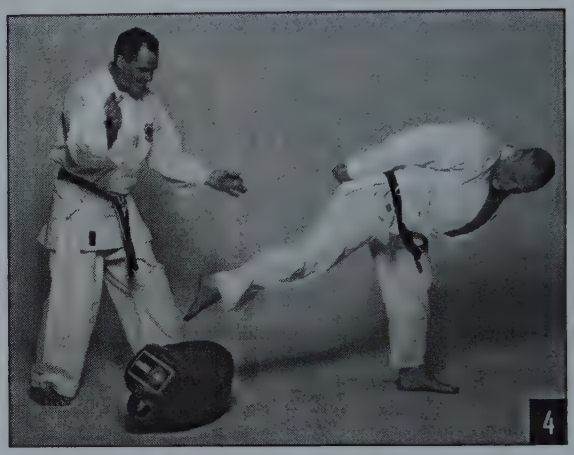


It is also important to drill the *kick-through feel* on a pad hold by a partner, as shown here.



Nothing like a partner for a good drill and the feeling of the kick going through

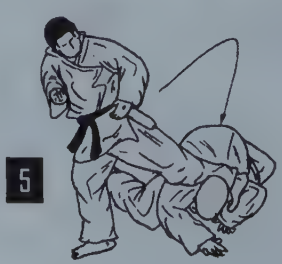




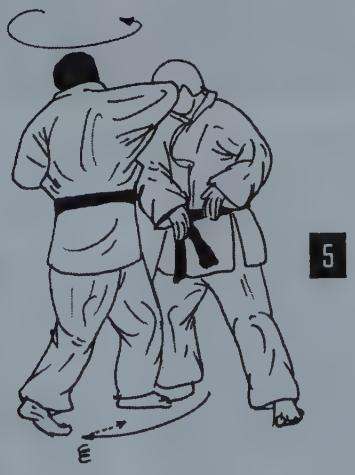
Self defense

This series shows the use of the kick after an arm-lock has brought your opponent on his knees. In this instance, you evade a punch on your assailant's outside while controlling his attacking hand and getting hold of it. You can soften him with a simultaneous palm strike. Bring him down on one knee with an elbow lock, and push him down while starting the delivery of your downward roundhouse. The kick "helps" him down and should be delivered in a non-snap and heavier manner, in order to bring his head all the way to the floor. As soon as the head reaches the floor, you could switch your stance to hit his head with a downward knee strike from the other leg.

An arm-lock push will bring him into perfect position for the Downward Roundhouse Kick



Another good move to achieve the necessary bent-over position for this kick is the knee strike to the groin or to the solar plexus. This is a great combination ending with the kick, again, to the back of the neck. You block an incoming punch in a cross-block (*Juji uke – Karatedo*) and deflect to your opponent's inside. You slap the arm down with the front hand to allow for a palm strike to the face. Keep control of your opponent's arm to allow for a circular elbow strike to his face, while you put him off-balance forward with a quick small sweep. Follow up with a knee strike to his abdomen as you release the arm and catch the back of his neck. Pivot back to leave the space in front of him empty as you push down his neck or pull on his arm. As he bends over or stumbles to the floor, kick down to the exposed back neck.



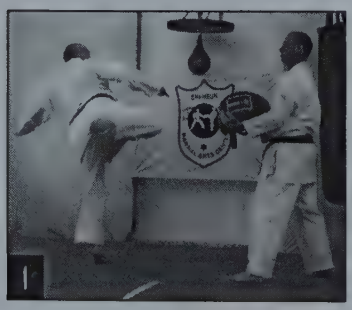
The kick is highly suitable as a follow-up to a circular knee to the solar plexus

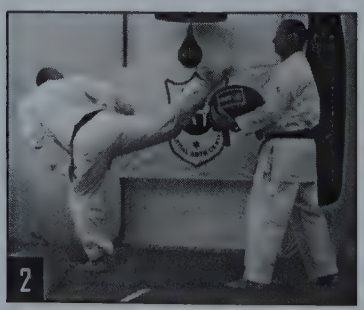
Illustrative photos

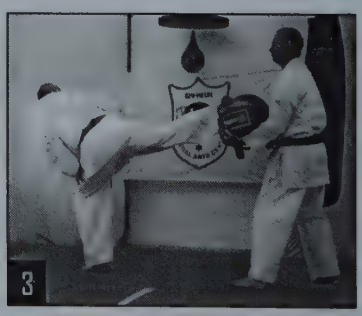
Simple Downward Roundhouse Kick to the thigh of a bent leg – *Roy Faige*

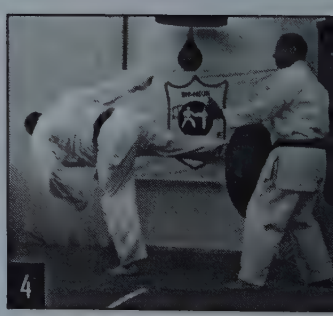
The basic Essential high Downward Roundhouse Kick on the standing focus bag

The high basic Downward Roundhouse Kick in action – *Marc de Bremaeker*; view from both sides

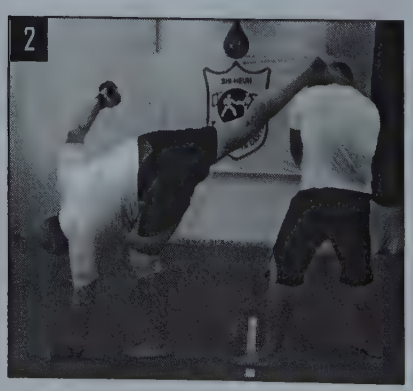








The low Downward Roundhouse Kick drilled on the focus pa



The Hand-on-floor version of the Downward Roundhouse Kick

10. The Low Hook Kick

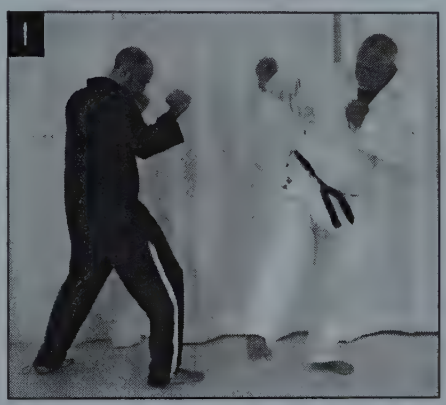
General

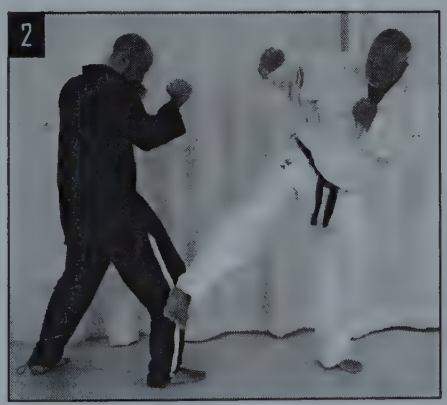
The Low Hook Kick is not a very powerful kick, and therefore must be directed as precisely as possible to sensitive points, like the knee itself or the nerve endings on the side of the thigh. It is fast though, and generally coming at an unexpected angle; it therefore can be very useful as part of a combination. The kick is generally delivered with the front leg, fast and explosively, as speed is its main attribute. A rear-leg delivery would be more part of a feint kick, and would rely more on deception than on speed. The kick is, in my personal opinion, a great offensive opening move, fast and very safe; it can painfully draw an opponent's attention away from a subsequent more powerful attack. My personal favorite combination is a Low Hook Kick attack to the outside of an opponent's front knee, followed by a *high* Head Roundhouse Kick coming from his inside (left).

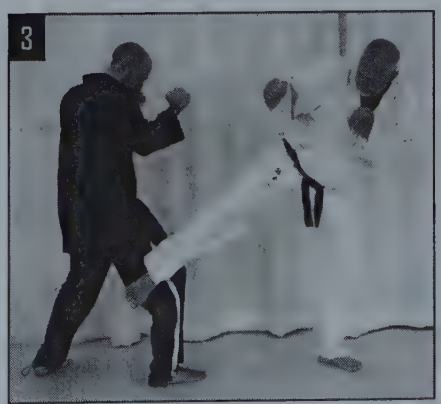
The painful low-outside Hook Kick clears the way for the high-inside Downward Roundhouse

Description

Lacking power, the classical Low Hook Kick is generally practiced dynamically, with a front hop. These photos show the classic straight-leg delivery, fully in line with an Essential basic front-leg Hook Kick. There is always some "hooking" to be given into the target after impact. For the basic theory about Hook Kicks and the principles of "hooking" at impact into the target, the reader is invited to refer to previous treatises about Essential Kicking.





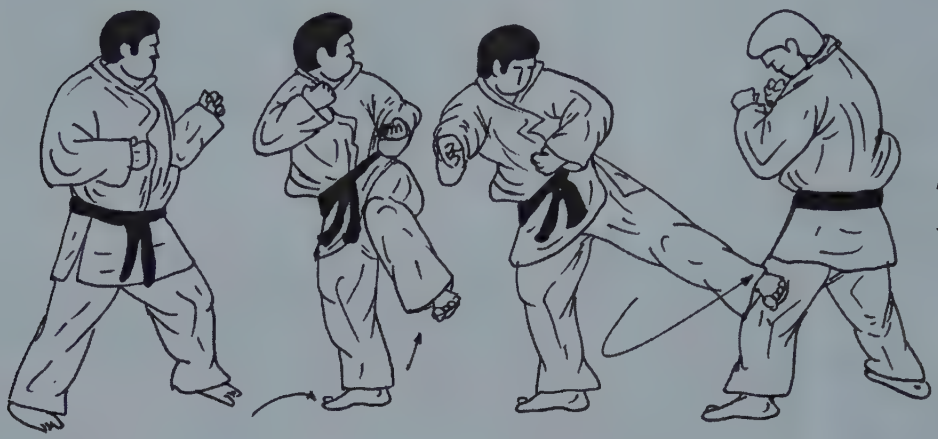


The classic front-leg Low straight-leg Hook Kick

The first illustration below shows a bent-leg *chambering* version of the kick, not to be confused with the bent-leg *finish* of the hooked version of the Hook Kick. This is different and more of a low kick version of the basic *Curved Side Kick*. It is confusing to the opponent and is also a more powerful kick at impact though; and therefore, quite useful. For clarity, we have included an illustration of the classic straight-leg version to compare to.

Targets

The knee from all sides, the inner and outer mid-thigh, the groin, the ankle, the base of the calf.



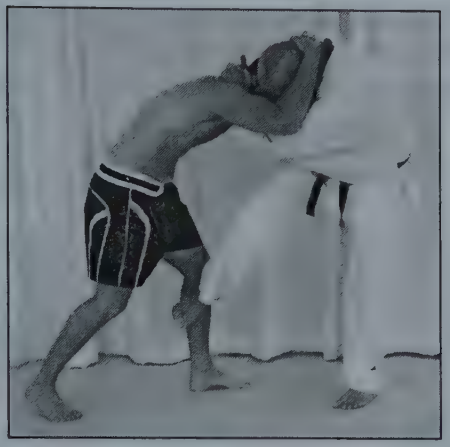
The bent-leg chambering version of the kick

The basic straight-leg Low Hook Kick, for comparison

Key points

- Keep the upper body as immobile as possible to avoid telegraphing your kick. This must be a fast and deceptive maneuver.
- Always kick *through* the target, and then add some *hooking* by bending the leg through the target.
- When attacking the side and rear of the leg, do not fall into the trap of considering this as a sweep: Even when aiming to cause your opponent to fall, it is always a kick first.

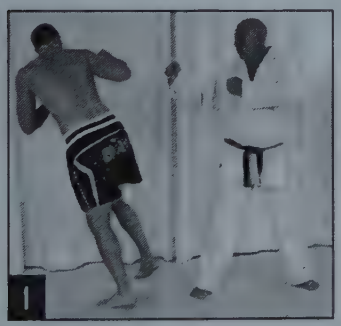
Typical application

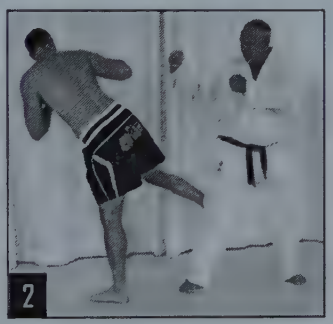


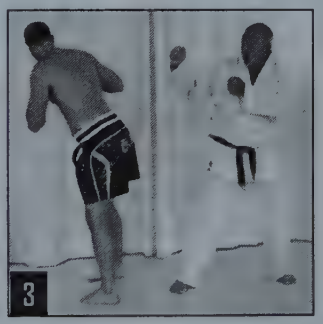
These photos show the use of the kick in a clinching situation, where all low kicks are relevant. Aim for the ankle or the base of the calf. This is generally not enough, and you will have to follow up with other low kicks.

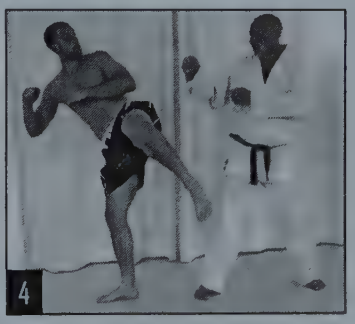
Low Hook Kick in clinching situation; keep kicking

Here is a classic use of the kick as a combination opener in which you hit your opponent's knee for pain and misdirection, and to put him somewhat off-balance. In the same stance, you attack his front knee from the outside and then lower the attacking leg deeply forward. Then spin-back into a high Spin-back Hook Kick with your other leg. This is a typical Low outside/High inside combination.

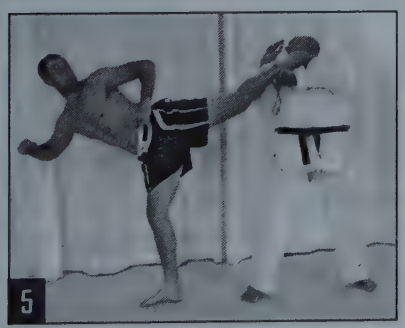




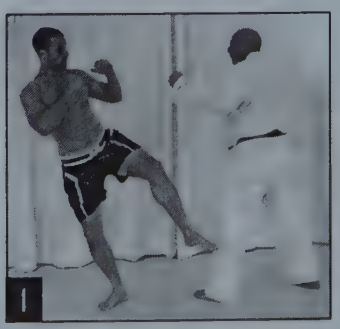


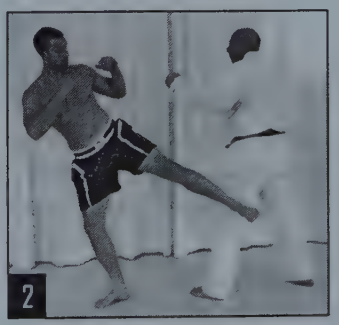


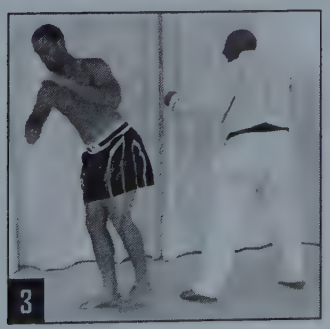
Low Hook on one side, high Hook on the other

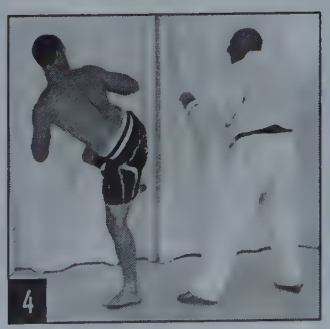


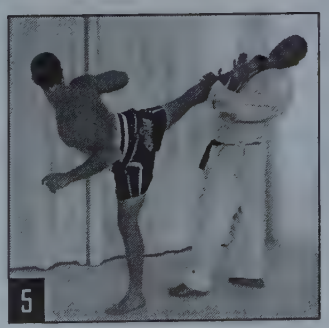
View from the other side



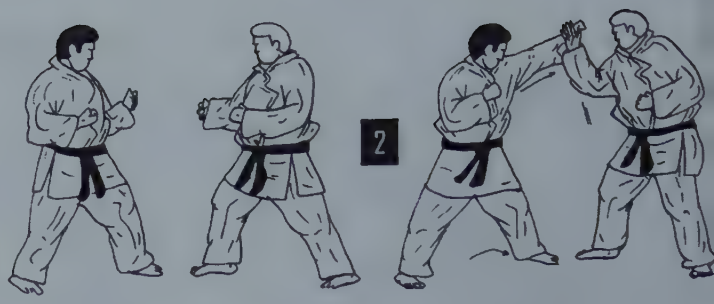








These illustrations show the application of the front-leg kick as a classic takedown in opposite stances, after a fake jab turning into a grab. Remember: This is a kick, not a sweep. The end result is the same, but more painfully so! Aim for the knee. Follow up with a punch and a stomp for example.



Hook-kick the knee while pushing him forward: both a kick and a takedown

Specific training

The most important aspect of this kick to train is the explosiveness of the delivery and the covering of any *tell-tales*. Practice in front of the mirror, and in front of a long heavy bag. Then practice combinations based on a Low Hook Kick opening, with no preceding hand move and no telegraph of your intentions.

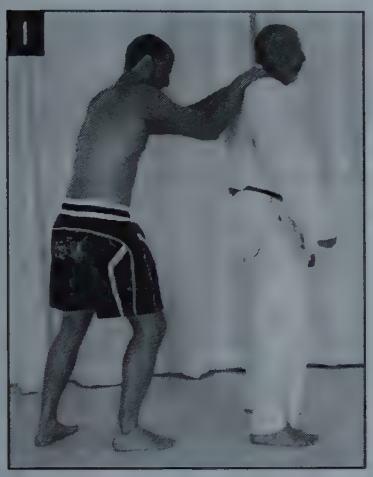
Invest time in serious Plyo-Flex training.

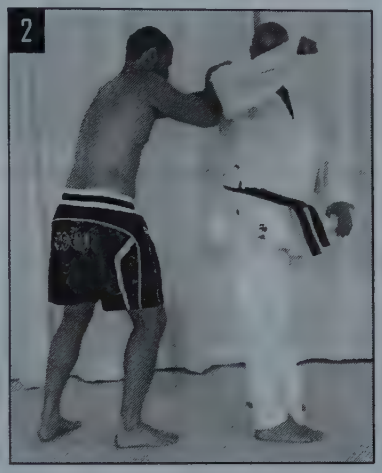
Self defense

This shows the use of the kick as a throw or as a pre-throw "softener" in a classical leg-grab situation: You have blocked your assailant's Roundhouse Kick and caught his leg. Attack his face with a palm or fingertips strike, while you start delivering a rear-leg Low Hook Kick to the base of his calf. Follow up smoothly with an inside leg sweep (*O Uchi Gari – Judo*) in which you lift him to make the fall start from as high as possible, with maximum damage in mind.

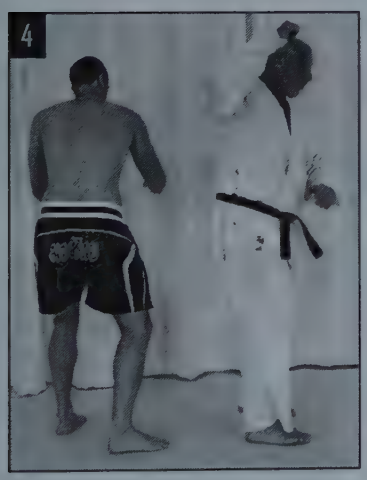
A painful variation on the *O-Uchi-Gari* theme

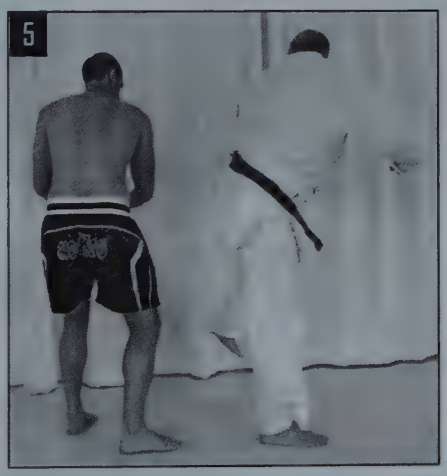
This page shows the use of the kick as the finishing touch of a defensive combination that switches attacks from side to side. If an assailant grabs your shoulder from behind, you have to take back the initiative quickly, before he follows up and takes control of the situation. In this example, twist back explosively, and use your forearm (Side of the grabbed shoulder) to strike his elbow joint with breaking it in mind. This move will also throw his upper body sideways and towards the Uppercut Back Kick (an important basic Essential Kick) you will be launching with the leg of the *other* (non-grabbed) side. You then switch sides again to use your other leg for a powerful low hook kick to the side of his knee. In this instance, try to kick as powerfully as possible and to aim precisely at the knee joint; this is to be a crippling kick.

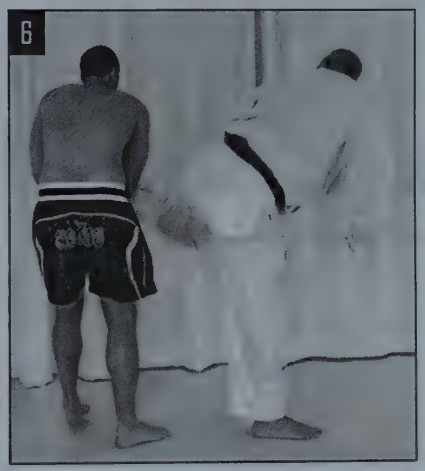


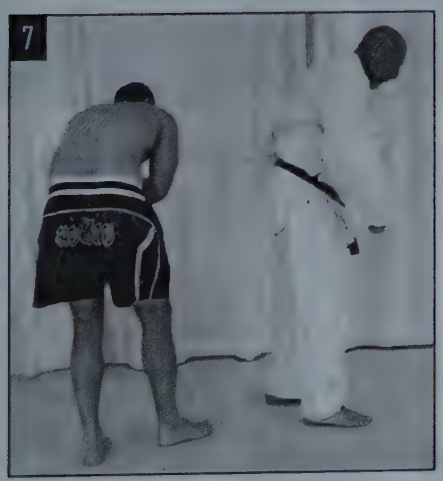


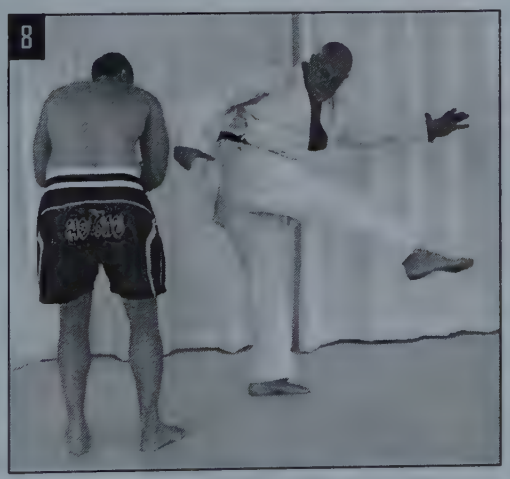
The Low Hook Kick as the finishing strike in a release from a rear shoulder grab

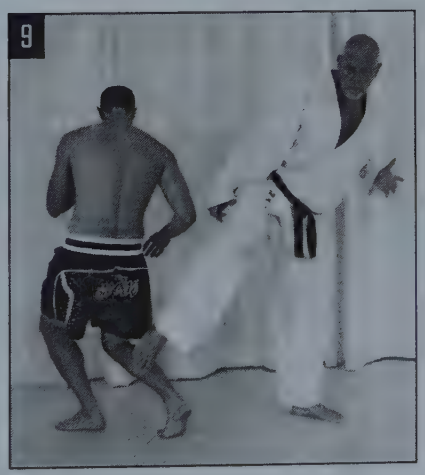












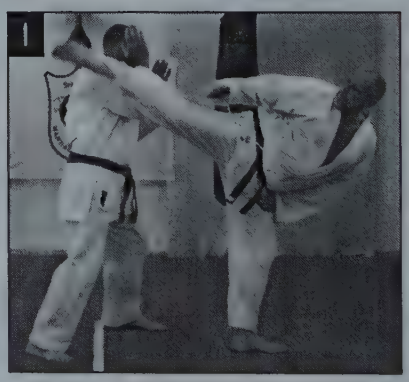
Not needless to add: should your opponent be crouching, kneeling or bent-over, the Low Hook Kick can be used as a head kick just like the basic Essential Hook Kick. The photos below show how a low "hooking" Roundhouse Kick to the inside forward knee can buckle your opponent in the right relative position for such a Low Hook Kick to the head.

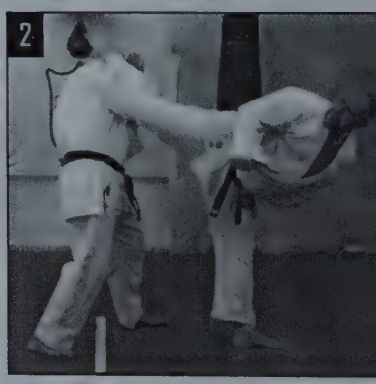
A Low Hook Kick to the head as a follow-up to a Low Roundhouse

Illustrative photos

The classic Essential *high* Hook Kick

The *ground* version of the Low Hook Kick





The Hook Kick: Hooking into the target at impact

An evading version of the Essential Hook Kick

11. The Low Spin-Back Hook Kick

General

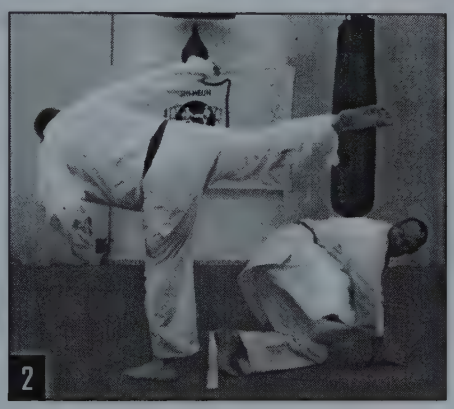
The Low Spin-back Hook Kick is obviously the spin-back version of the previous kick, and all what was said before is relevant here again. But the spin-back version is much more powerful though because of the kinetic energy gathered when pivoting.

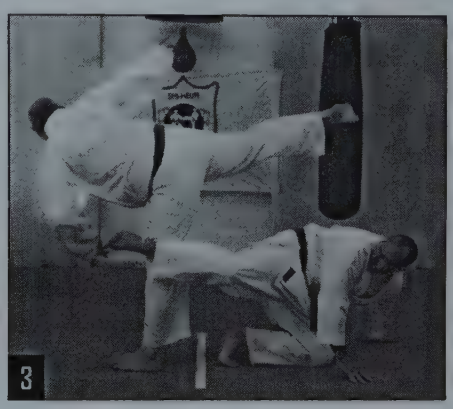
The kick is a great sweep kick against the standing leg of a kicking opponent, as illustrated by the ground version of the kick. The standing version is an easy-to use and painful kick that can be implemented in many situations.

Key points

- Release the kicking leg at the last possible moment of your pivot, just as a coiled elastic band.
- Kick through the target.
- Always add some "hooking" at impact by starting to bend back the leg *into* the target.

The ground version of the Spin-back Hook Kick as the "cutting" takedown of a high kicker – *Ziv Faige*





Description

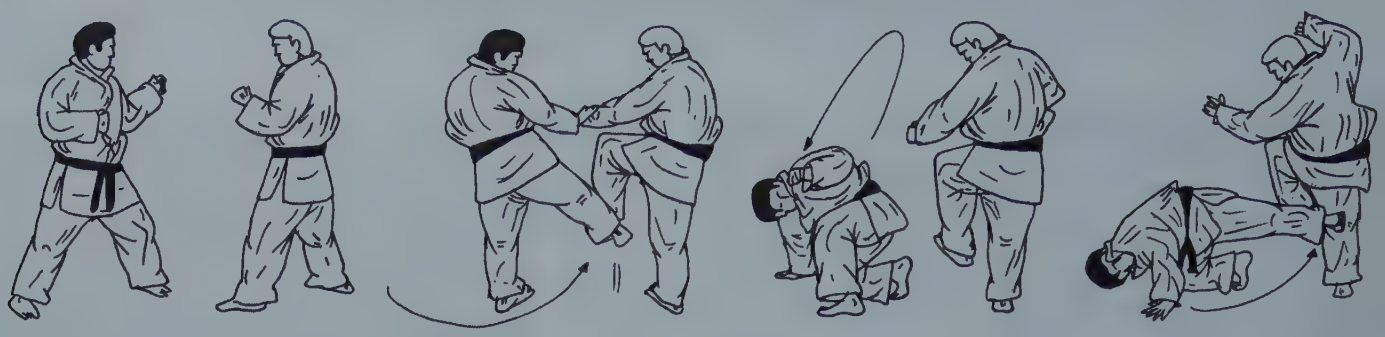
The Spin-back Low Kick is identical in its delivery to the Essential classical Spin-back Hook Kick as performed on higher targets and as presented in previous work. As shown in Illustration A, you spin back, *starting with the head and shoulders*, then hips, and only last, the coiled leg. The kick can be delivered nearly straight and upright (Illustration A), or leaning back as in Illustration B, or even with the hand on the floor (Illustration C).

Full Spin-back, just like the Essential high kick, but aiming at the lower leg

Leaning back during the kick will keep your upper body out-of-trouble

You can even lean until your hand touches the floor

We should also mention again the *drop* version of the kick, generally a "cutting" kick or a low kick aimed at the groin.

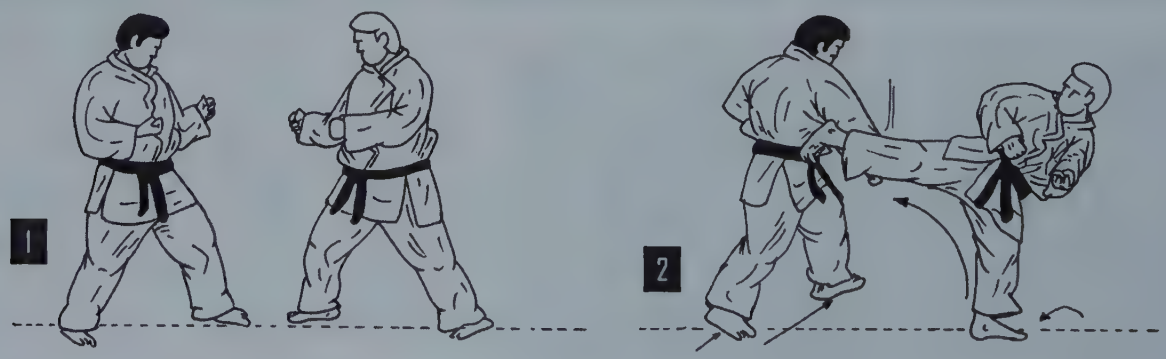


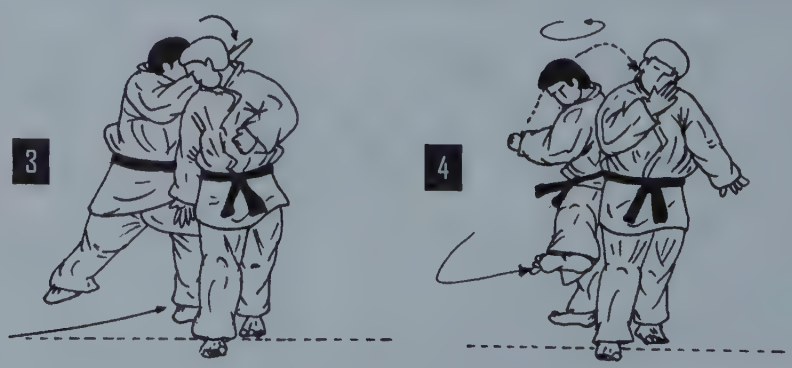
The Drop Spin-back Low Hook Kick as an *offensive* "cutting" kick

All variations of the Essential Hook Kicks are valid for the Low Kicks. The reader is invited to refer to the "Essential Kicks" volume where a whole chapter is dedicated to Hook Kicks. The reader should also refer to the variations presented in the previous section (Low Hook Kick). For example—like the *regular* Low Hook Kick just presented—the spin-back version can be delivered with a slightly bent attacking leg during the spin-back (although that slightly reduces the power of the kick).

Typical application

This series shows an interesting application that underlines the versatility of low kicks. It shows the use of the kick after evading, blocking and deflecting a Side Kick from the outside. Step further behind your opponent and hit his back neck (*high*) with a knife-hand strike. Then, spin-back to deliver a *low* Hook Kick to the side of his *front* knee. Follow up, with a *high* back-fist strike for example.

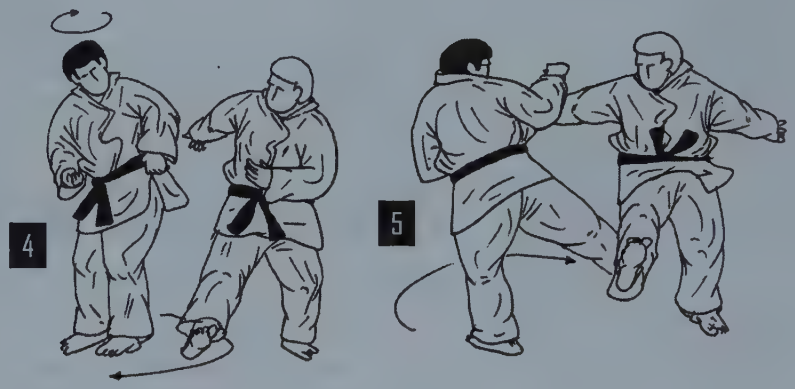




A low Spin-back Hook Kick is painful and surprising, especially in-between high strikes

One of the most common uses of this kick in traditional and sport *Karate* is as a counter to sweeps. In these cases, the kick is used as a sweeping take-down itself, but more often than not it is a real kick, disguised as a sweep if the rules forbid low kicks. The figures below show how to evade a sweep, lifting the attacked leg and then lowering it back into your own sweep-kick of the sweeping leg. You follow up with a Spin-back Low Hook *Kick* to the sweeping leg of your now-off-balance opponent.

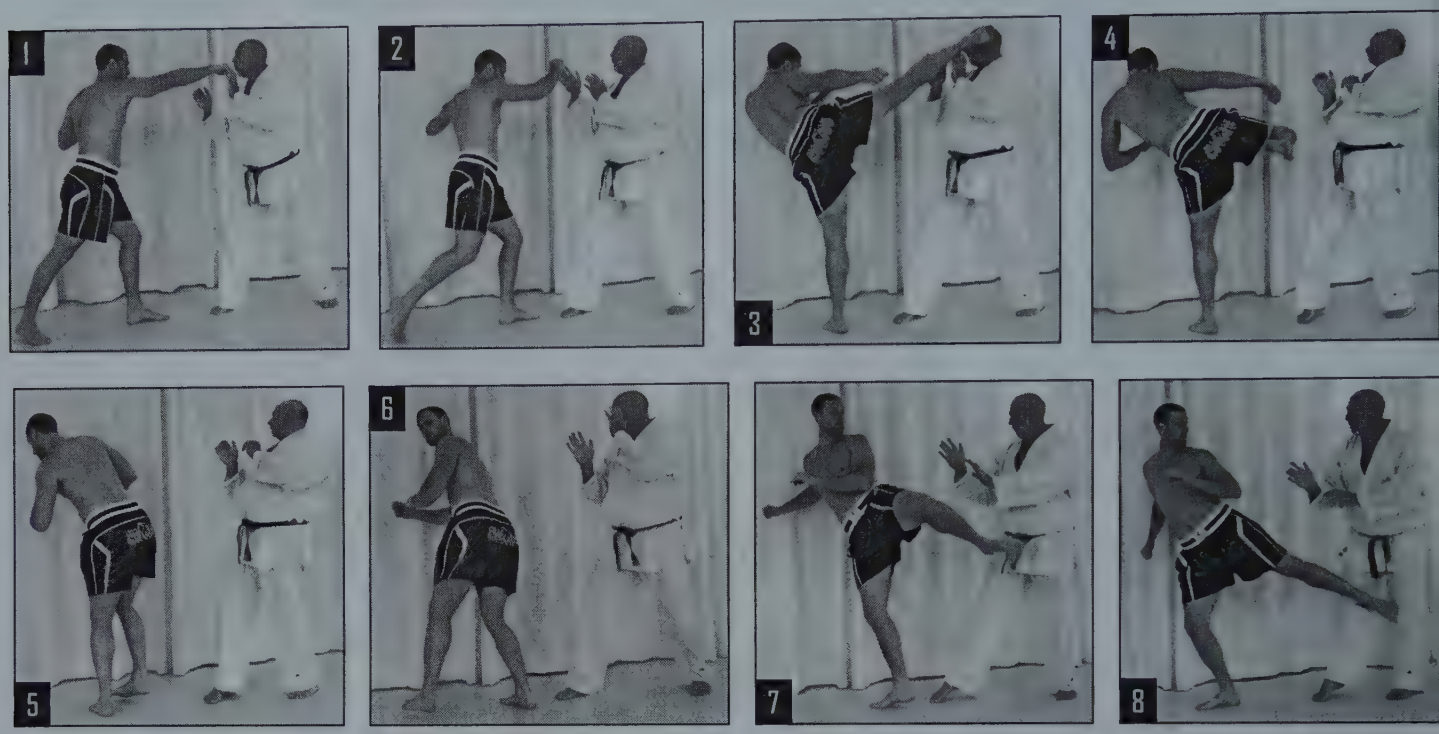
Lift the leg and sweep the sweep; then kick



This sequence shows the other approach against a sweep: You go *with* the sweep and so cause your opponent to overstretch, while you start your spin-back.

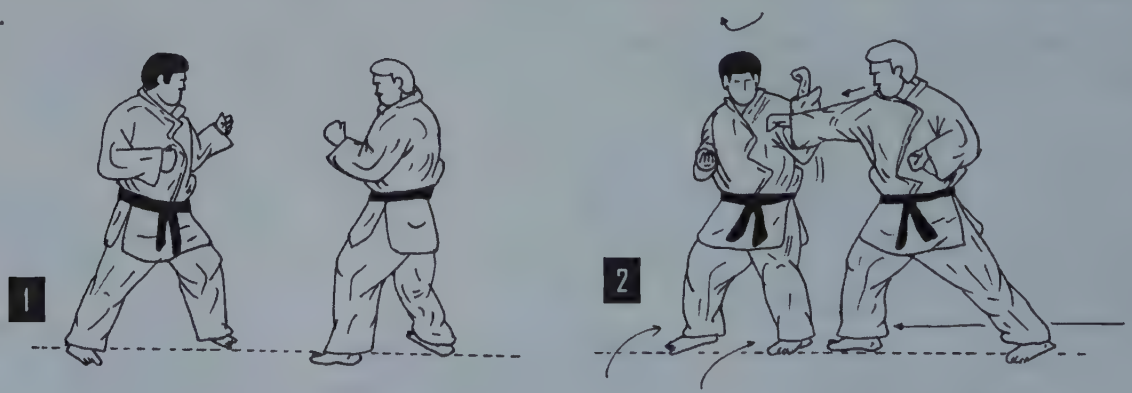
Do not resist, go with the sweep; then spin-back hook kick

These photos show an aggressive hi/hi/lo combination. Lunge forward with a reverse punch (*Gyacku Tsuki – Karatedo*) towards your opponent's face, naturally followed (hip pull) by a high rear-leg full-powered Roundhouse Kick. Lower the leg while keeping the circular momentum, and spin back into the *Low* Hook Kick to the side of his front thigh.

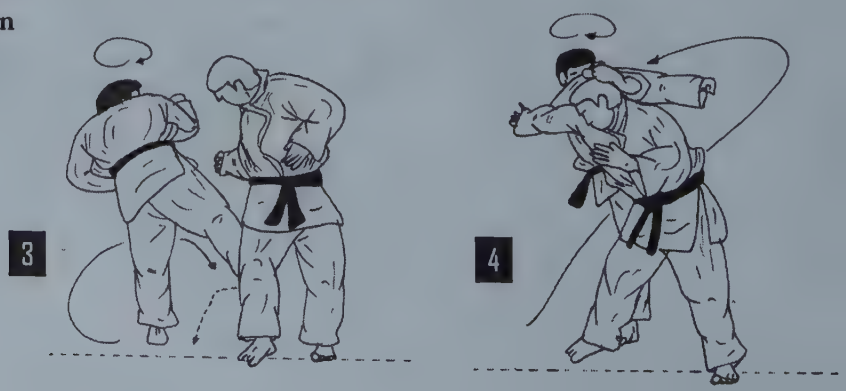


Unexpected: Hi Cross punch, Hi Roundhouse Kick, Lo Spin-back Hook Kick

These figures show, again, the use of the kick in an outside evasion maneuver, this time blocking a full-step punch (*Oie Tsuki – Karate*). Keep pivoting directly into the spin-back kick to the side or back of his front leg. Lower the leg and complete the pivot into a full-powered high Roundhouse Kick with the other leg. You could also roundhouse-kick low, in the spirit of the book, but the author has already made clear he tends to prefer alternating heights in combinations.

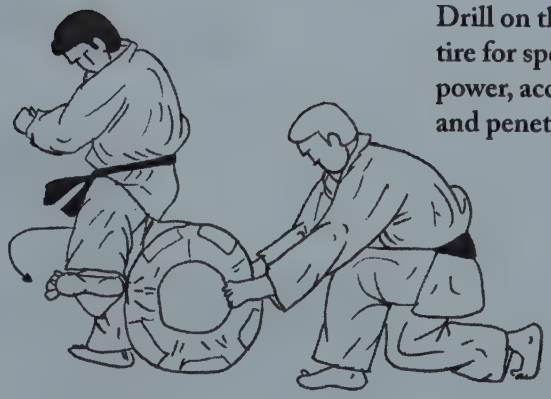


Evade out and turn the evasion into a Spin-back Kick



Specific training

- This kick needs precision drilling as it needs to be fast and accurate. Drill on a marked long heavy bag, delivering the kick upright and bent-over, and from different ranges.
- Hit a tire held by a partner (right).



Drill on the old tire for speed, power, accuracy and penetration

Self defense

The photos below show a very simple maneuver when suddenly punched. As your assailant jabs towards your face, lean back while stop-kicking him with a front-leg Side Kick to the knee. Keeping your upper body away, lower the leg and spin back into a Hook Kick to the side of the same knee.

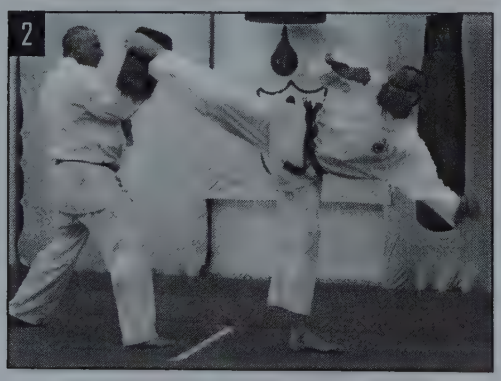
Low Stop-Side Kick followed by Spin-back Hook to *same* knee

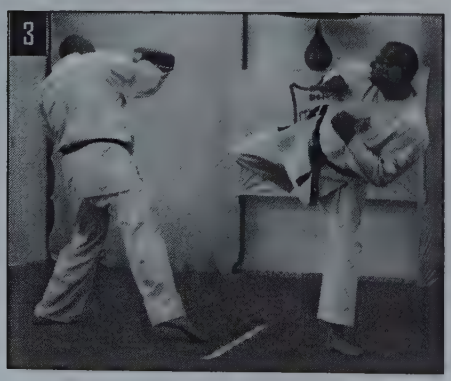
These illustrations show the kick as a natural follow-up of a spin-back maneuver: As an assailant grabs your wrist with his opposite hand, spin back around the axis of your front foot/grabbed wrist while lifting the hand and bending the elbow. You classically liberate your wrist by pulling it free in the opening between his thumb and other fingers. Complete the spin-back with a Low Hook Kick to his rear leg. Follow up in a manner the situation warrants.

Any spin-back pivot can be capped with the Spin-back Hook Kick

Illustrative photos

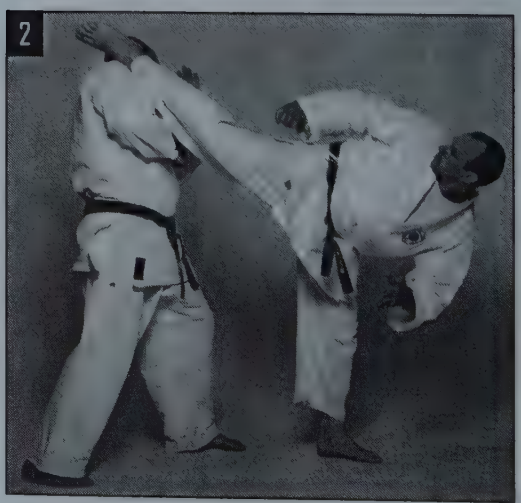
The classic Spin-back Hook Kick in combat – *Marc De Bremaeker*





Drilling the Essential high Spin-back Hook Kick

The elastic band principle: the Spin-back starts with the head, then shoulders, then hips, then leg…



12. The Low Side Kick

Yoko Fumikiri (Karatedo)

General

This is a devastating kick, ideal for self-defense, safe to deliver and extremely effective. It is reportedly the kick of choice of *Bruce Lee's Jeet Kune Do* system, advocating the attack of the foremost point of the opponent with the forward weapon closest to him (Front-leg kick). It can be delivered fast from the guard position and gives maximum results for minimum effort. It is not a stomp though, but a regular kick with chambering and chambering-back. This is a must-practice kick, in all schools and systems. It is often a front-leg kick, as a stop-kick in all situations or as a "cutting" kick against the standing leg of a kicking adversary. It can easily be delivered while leaning safely back, which adds to its safety. Given the ease of execution and the sensitivity of the knee as a target, it is probably one of the best self-defense kicks available!

Fumikiri – Low Side Kick by *Oren Faige*

A great self-defense kick in all its forms: front- or rear-leg, body-bent, hand-on-floor, hopping, and more...

Classic *Krav Maga* series: Wrist grab-release concluded by a Low Side Kick to the knee

Description

The kick is an Essential Penetrating Side Kick delivered to the legs of the opponent. All variations of the classic Side Kick are applicable to the Low Side Kick. Our previous book about Essential Kicks contains a whole chapter about Side Kicks, and the reader is invited to refer to it for the general theory of optimal execution. As discussed in the introduction, the amount of chambering for the low version will depend on the situation, but some chambering is definitely needed: the kick is delivered with the classic *hip thrust* of the classical Side Kick, which gives it its tremendous power. Some recoiling back is needed as well, after penetrating the target a bit.

Illustration A shows the classic delivery of the kick from the front leg. The upper body can be bent back as much as needed to keep it away from the opponent.

Figure B shows a version of the Essential *Upward* Side Kick applied to the low "gate". In Japanese, it would be a *keage* version, as opposed to the classic penetrating *kekomi* version. This is a kick to use fast when you are too close for the classic *Penetrating* Low Side Kick: It is much less powerful as it supposes less chambering, but it is faster and still painful on the shins. Follow-up is definitely required though.

Front-leg Low Side Kick. Make sure you chamber back

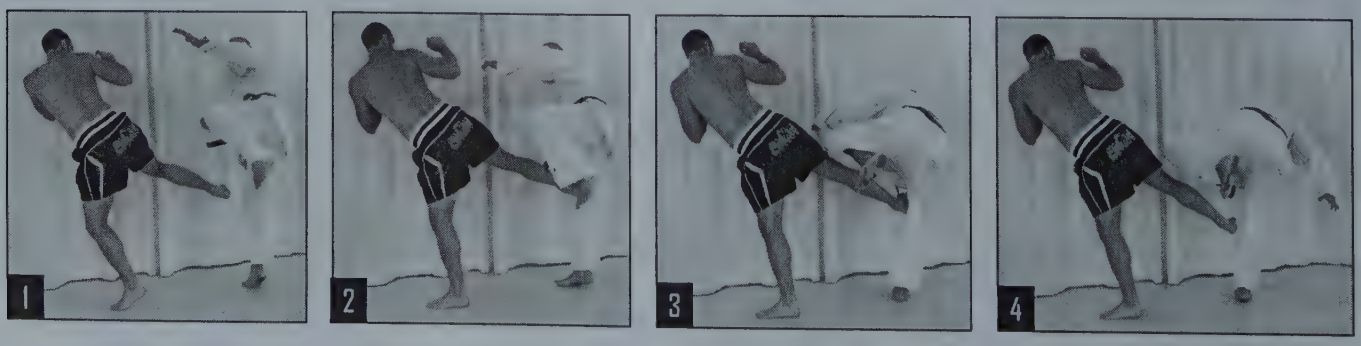
The more keage version of the kick: faster but less powerful

Typical application

As mentioned before and illustrated below, this is a great *cutting* kick: Side-kick the standing leg of your opponent as he attempts a rear-leg high Roundhouse Kick. Make sure you are ready to smother your opponent's kick with your shoulder and guard if needed. This technique is a basic codified exercise of the *Sankukai* style of *Karate* already mentioned, part of their *Randori ni no Kata.*

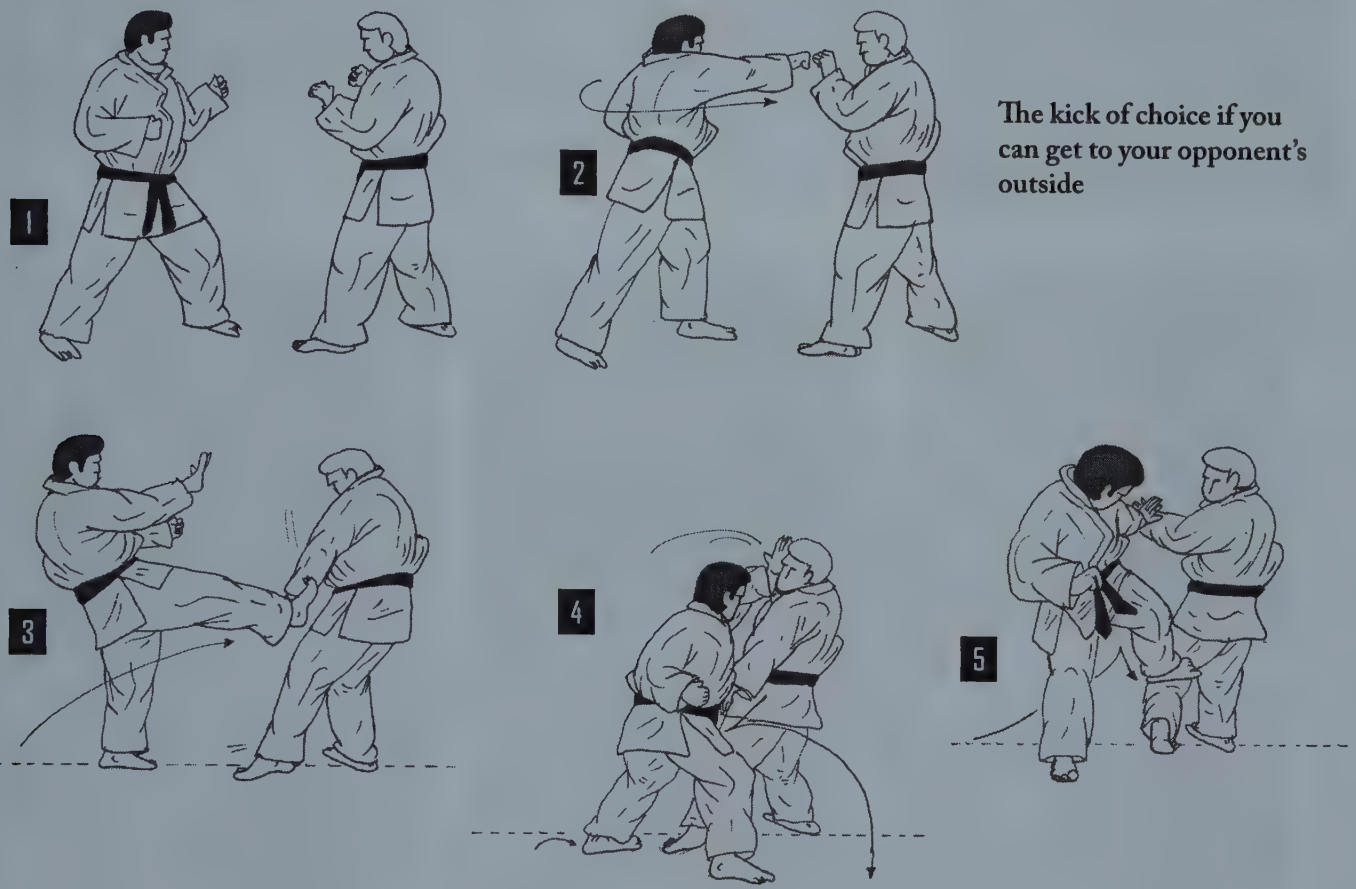
Key points

- Avoid telegraphing your kick by moving the upper body in any way.
- Explode into the kick, and if you need to cover distance, hop *after* chambering the kick for minimum telegraphing.
- Always chamber in and back.



The "cutting" version of the Low Side Kick

As illustrated below, this is also the kick of choice when you find yourself on your opponent's outside. In this offensive combination, you throw a high reverse punch/rear leg midsection Front Kick, leaving your hand in front of his face for vision jamming. Land *deep* on his outside while striking his face from the inside with your palm. Try to keep control of his blocking front hand while delivering a Side Kick to the outside or to the back of his knee.



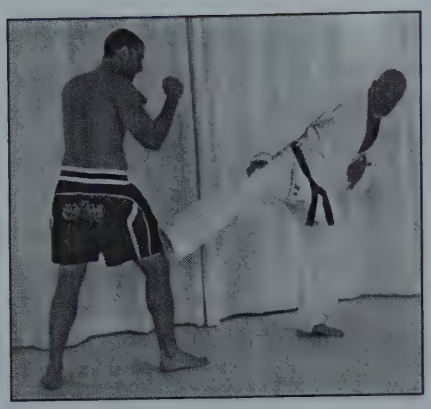
The kick of choice if you can get to your opponent's outside

Specific training

- This is a kick which needs to be drilled for power: practice on a standing bag held by a partner. Make sure you explode into the movement.
- Practice on a tire hold by a partner for penetration.
- Practice for "non-telegraphing" in front of the mirror.
- Practice closing the gap against a partner with protected legs: he will try to stop-hit you, or retreat; you must explode into the kick with no tell-tales.
- Improve your abilities with regular and comprehensive PLYO –FLEX training.

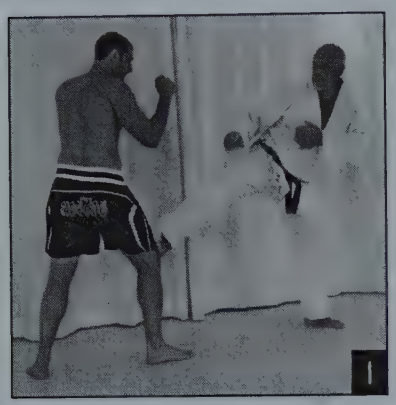
Targets

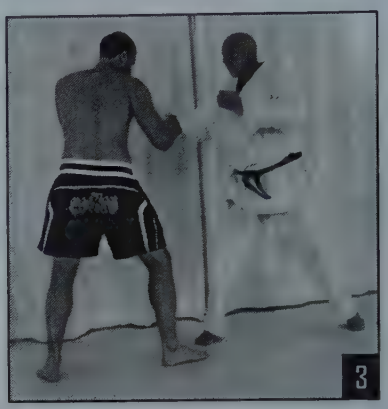
The knee from all sides, the shins, the thigh and even the hip and groin area.



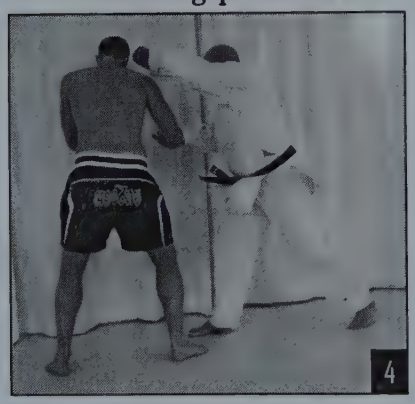
Low front-leg Side Kick as a stop-kick

This is also the kick of choice to safely close the gap with your opponent or stop him at the slightest hint of movement, as shown at left. Such an untelegraphed kick will help you close the gap, hurt your opponent, and prevent any counterattack. Remember to keep upper body immobile as you hop into the kick. The photos below show a typical combination starting with the gap-closing version of the kick; then, extend your front hand when landing forward to cause him to block, and take control of his arm. Pull the arm in, while delivering a cross to his jaw very much out of his vision range. Finish with a "Low Kick".

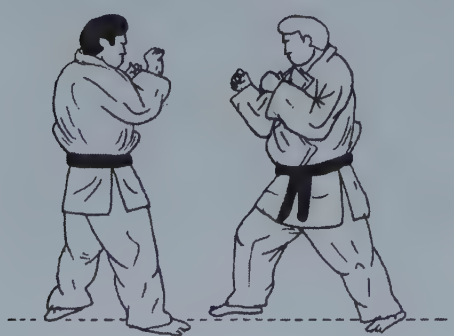


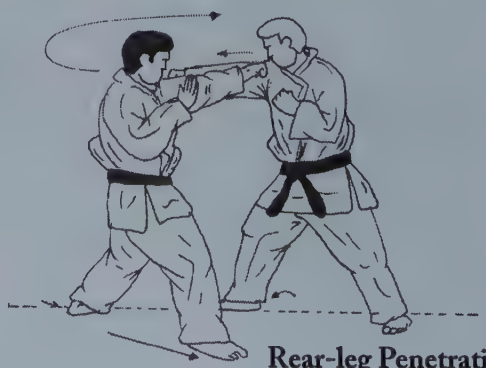


Close the gap with the front-leg Low Side Kick as it will immobilize your opponent; follow up



The figures that follow show an interesting exotic variation of the kick: A rear-leg kick delivery and attacking the opponent's rear knee! In this example, you evade a jab forward and to your opponent's inside while reverse-punching him. (Keep your other hand up!) Immediately keep pivoting with the hips to deliver a side kick to his rear knee, as his front one is too close in range.





Rear-leg Penetrating Side Kick to opponent's rear kne

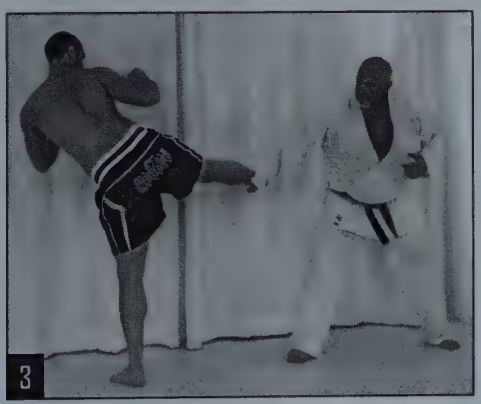
Self defense

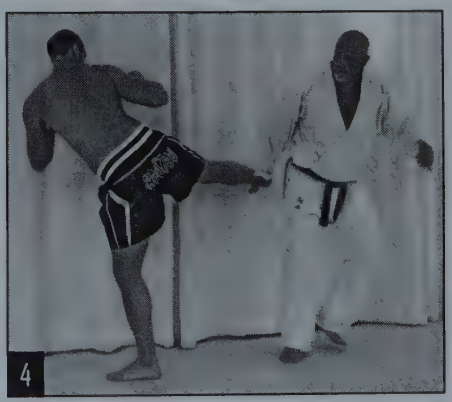
This shows the classic use of the rear-leg kick to the standing knee of a kicking opponent, whose leg you have caught from the inside. This is a kick, not a throw, but will get him on the floor all the more. Immediately stomp his ankle to neutralize him.

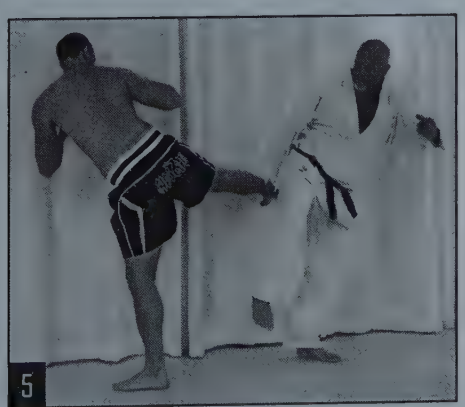
The classic rear-leg cutting kick

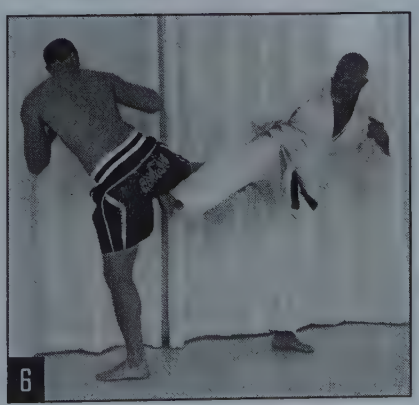
The series below shows another example, this time a catching block from the outside, and countering with a front-leg Side Kick to the *upper* thigh, in the groin area. In this case, it is more effective to use a hybrid of the Penetrating- and the Upward- Side Kick.

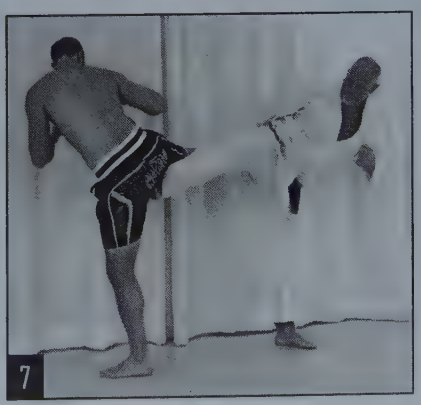
The Side Kick to the upper thigh reverberates to the groin area!







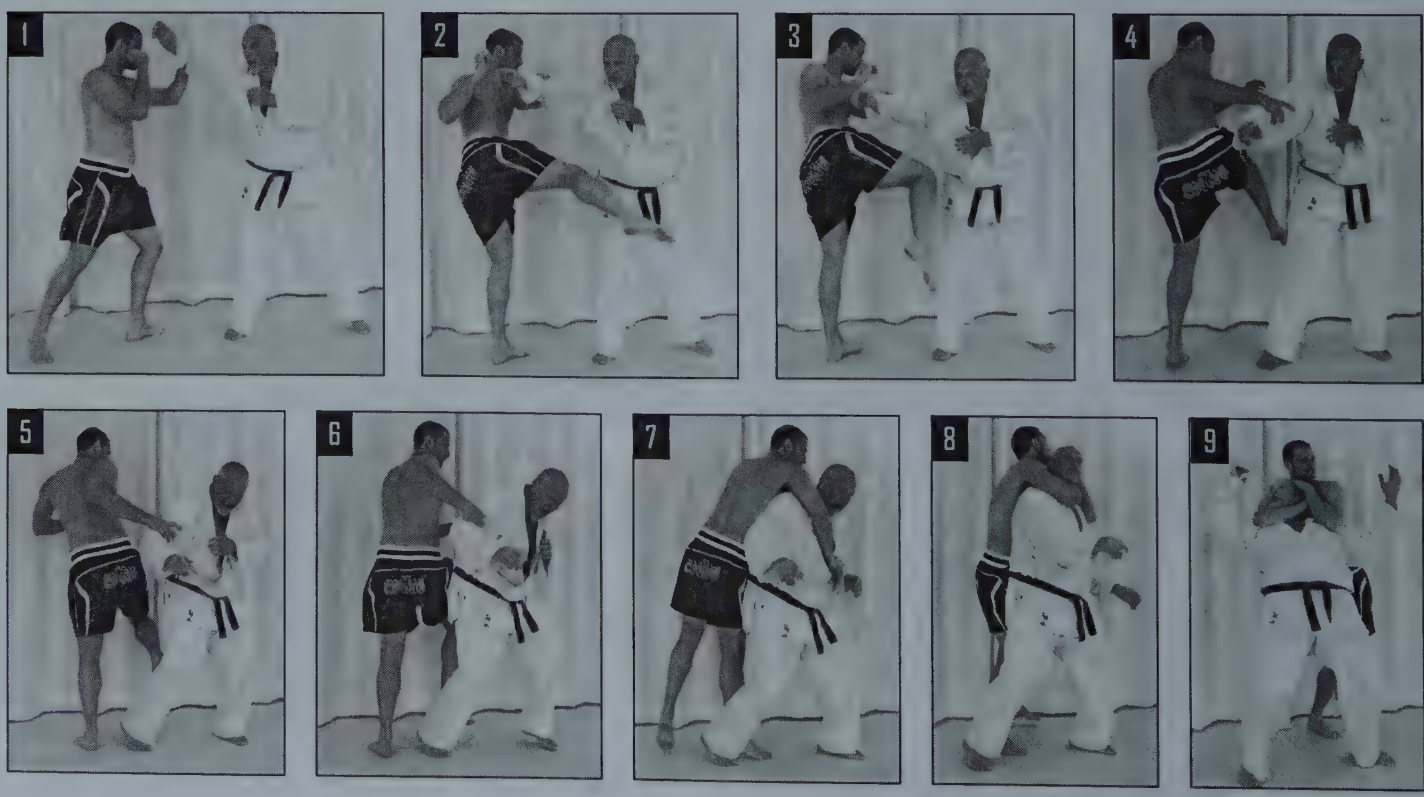




Here is a self-defense application of the kick at lower shin/ankle level: You are grabbed at the collar from behind and pushed forward. One step forward to neutralize the push and start to pivot, so that he pushes in the void. Side-kick his ankle and knife-hand his elbow joint. Keep the pivot and conclude with a straight-leg Roundhouse to the knee with the other leg. {You could also pivot back in the other direction and deliver an Essential Short Back Kick to his abdomen—not illustrated}.

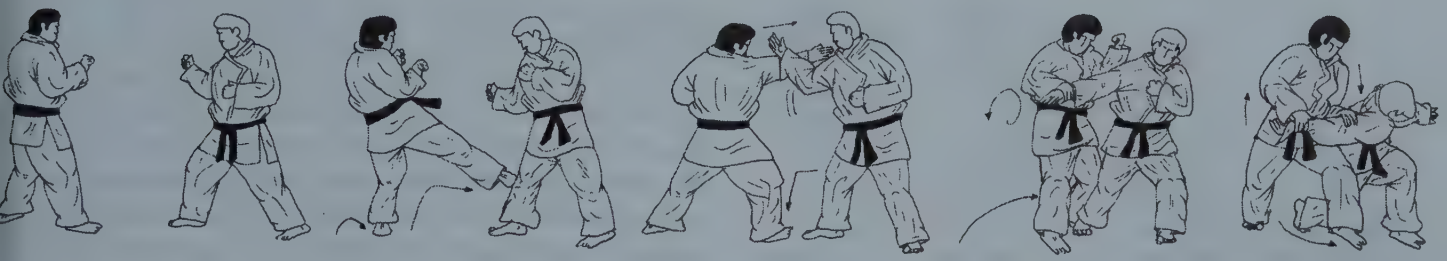
Yield to his push to put him off-balance and bounce back with a Low Side Kick to the shin

As mentioned, this is the kick of choice when you succeed in positioning yourself on your opponent's out-side (blind side). It will also allow you to set-up a good follow-up. The photos that follow show an outside evasion to a high punch with a block & catch, and simultaneous Small Roundhouse to the groin. The leg recoils and goes directly (not touching the floor!) into a Side Kick to the side of his leg. This is a classical combination, very natural in its execution and which should be drilled as such. You can follow up by pulling his arm forward while stepping behind him and placing him in a rear naked choke (*Hadaka Jime* – Judo). You can stomp-kick the back of his other knee for more control.



From inside Roundhouse to outside Side Kick

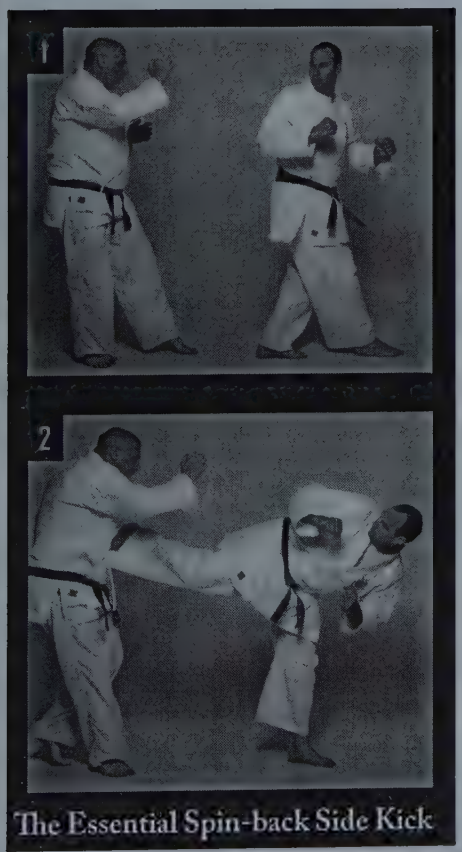
These figures show the same gap-closing technique, to start an offensive combination, as presented in the "Typical Application" section, but this time, with the purpose of getting control of the opponent with an arm-lock.



Close the gap with a Low front-leg Side Kick; attack his eyes to cause a block and get hold of his arm from the outside; proceed to arm-lock

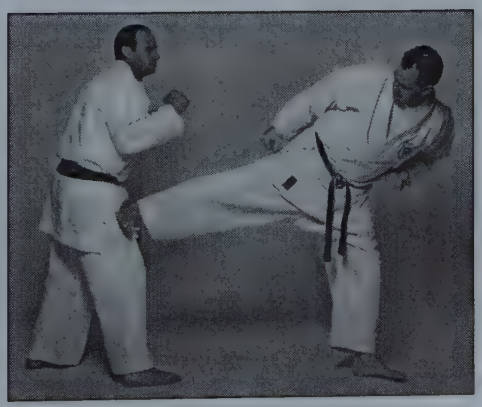
Illustrative photos

The Essential Upward Side Kick
– *Ziv Faige*



The Essential Spin-back Side Kick

The Essential Penetrating Side Kick



The Low Side Kick
– *Roy Faige*

13. The Low Side Stomp Kick

Yoko Fumikomi (Karatedo)

General

The name of the kick makes it self-explanatory: A Downward Low Side Kick crushing the top of the opponent's foot or the back of his knee, and stomping it into the floor. This is a devastating kick, of course, painful to the extreme and easy to deliver. Just remember to keep your guard up as it brings you pretty close to your opponent! It is interesting to note that this kick, often as a natural follow-up to the Full Essential Crescent Kick, is very common in old traditional *Shotokan-ryu Karatedo* forms.

The reader should note that the examples given in the previous section, about Low Side Kicks, are often partly "stomping" in their delivery. We have presented purposely two sections for Low Side Kicks—regular and stomp—but it is clear that most deliveries in Martial Arts are hybrids with more or less emphasis and only classification needs make for the description of the classic extremes. Some of the kicks presented here in the applications can be found by the reader less "stomping" than some from the previous section and vice-versa... we are only asking you to understand the principles and work as per your affinities and the specific situation.

Classic Krav Maga series: The use of the Low Side Stomp Kick

Another classic Krav Maga series: side knee Stomp

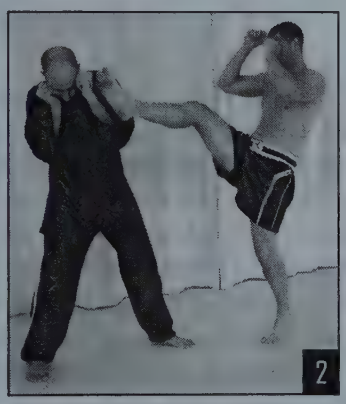
Excerpt of *Heian Godan Kata* form: Crescent Kick turns into Side Stomp Kick

Description

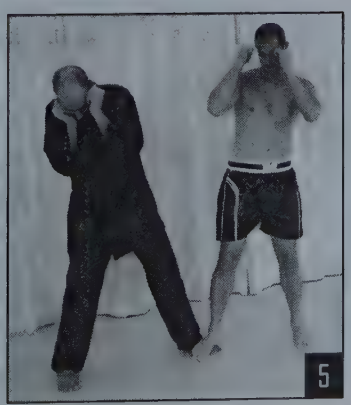
As shown at right, this kick definitely requires chambering, very much like a regular Side Kick. The amount of chambering is up to the circumstances. Once chambered, you then stomp through the target, as if you were trying to hit the floor as powerfully as possible. In this kick-type, you do not chamber back automatically: You can either grind your opponent's joint into the floor, or remove your leg to follow up. Please note than if you powerfully push an opponent backwards while keeping your foot on his, he will fall down in a nasty way.

The photos below show the classical delivery of the kick as an intrinsic part of a crescent kick, just as practiced in traditional *Karate Kata* forms: Hit your opponent's guard with a high Crescent Kick and stomp down on his lead foot.

The rear-leg simple delivery of the Stomp Side Kick



The Crescent Kick into the guard turns into a Side Stomp Kick



Key points

- This kick, in its orthodox form, is different from the previous low kick: You kick *through* without any chambering-back afterthought. Whether you kick the foot, ankle or back of the knee, the feeling is total stomping, as if trying to kill a crawling insect as forcefully as possible. This is the ultimate "kick-through".
- Keep your guard up.
- Always chamber up: stomping is about power.

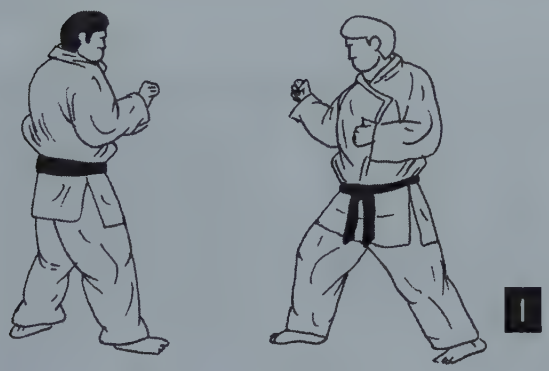
Targets

The top of the foot, the ankle and the back of the knee.

Any part of a lying opponent, but preferably the ankles and fingers.

Typical application

The figures below show an important and quite common application, already encountered with other kicks: The "Scrape and Stomp". After a distance-closing Low Side Kick to the knee (or a stop-kick), do not chamber back; it makes your kick less powerful and sort of a "pushing" kick. But you then start switching your body weight to the kicking leg, while *scraping* down his shin to finish up in a stomp of the top of his foot. The aggressive scraping of the sensitive tibia (shin bone) is intended to be a painful addition to the stomp. Of course, keep your guard up and follow up. It is less powerful a Stomp, but has an annoying grating effect.

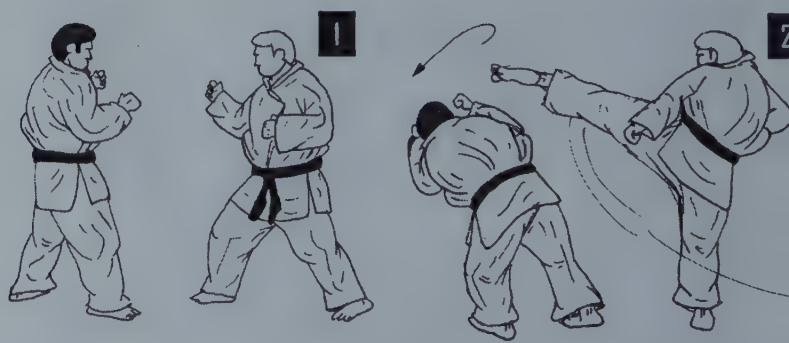


The cunning Scrape & Stomp

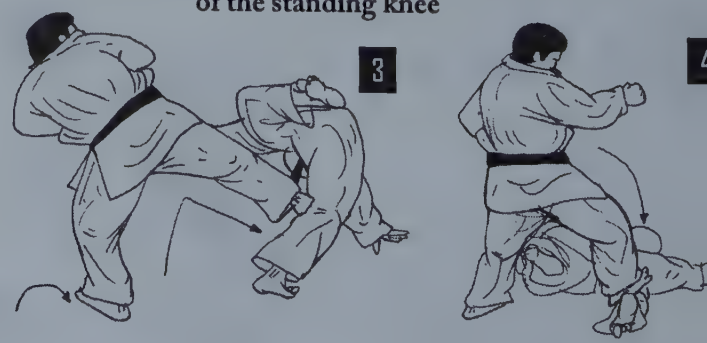
This series shows the application of the Side Stomp Kick in a clinching situation. Simple but effective, always the best application. Please note that some *scraping* is also possible in these close quarters, even if you have chambered up: Just make sure you kick down as close as possible to the shin, and, hopefully, some scraping will occur.

Side Stomp Kick as soon as clinched

The figures below show the application of the kick as a "cutting" kick against the standing leg of a kicking opponent. This kick is different from the previous regular cutting Low Side Kick: In this particular case, you will stomp into the back of the knee to bring his knee into the floor and grind it in. Avoid a high Roundhouse Kick to the head by bending and leaning back, and then hop into a Side Stomp Kick to the back of his knee, as soon as his leg has passed you over. **Be careful:** This is a very dangerous technique for your opponent's knee joint. In a serious real-life encounter, grind his knee joint into the floor, as if it were a cigarette butt.



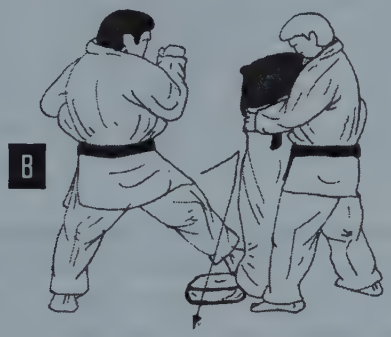
Duck the high Roundhouse and side-stomp the back of the standing knee



Specific training

Although it seems simple and easy, this kick still needs serious training for power and "through"-kicking: Practice on a tire held by a partner (knee-like target) and lying on the floor (ankle-like target, see illustration A). Practice the scrape and stomp on a heavy bag and a focus pad lying on the floor (See illustration B). Practice on a human-form-bag held by a partner or a bag lying on the floor.

Stomp the old tire for power; think about crushing it



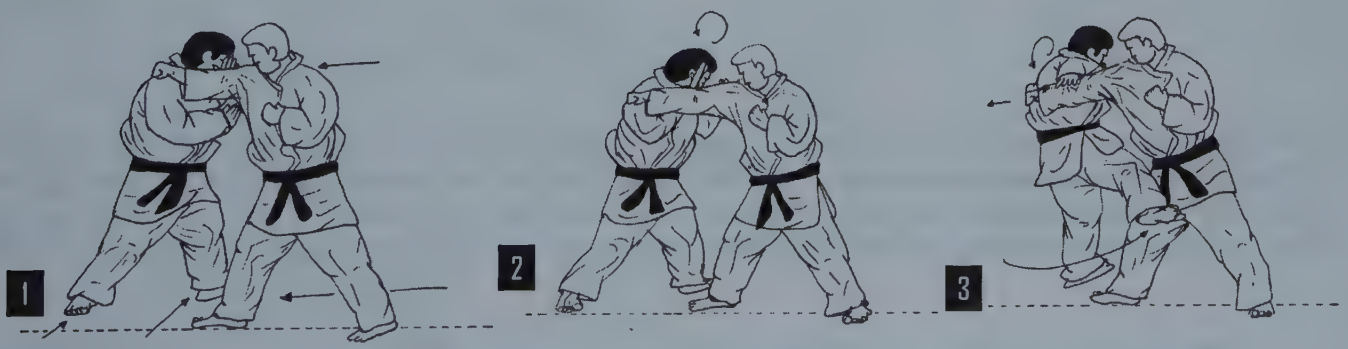
Scrape and Stomp-training; use a bag and a focus pad

Self defense

As shown below, this kick delivered to the back of the knee, is the best maneuver to help a third party being attacked: Coming from behind the assailant, grip his shoulder while stomping the back of his knee *into the floor*. From there, you can follow up with an arm-lock, a choke or a strike to the head.

Best Kick to help a third party

Just as with the regular Low Side Kick, the *Stomp* Side Kick is a natural follow-up to a Groin Roundhouse delivered from the out-side of an opponent. This combination is different than the similar combination presented in the previous section, as the kick to the knee is a Stomp all the way down. Evade and control your assailant's punch from the outside, catch his arm and deliver a fast Groin Small Roundhouse Kick from the outside. Chamber back, and from the chambered position, stomp directly down into the back of his knee. Keep control of his arm, catch his hair to pull back his head and open his throat to a knife-hand strike or an elbow strike, if warranted.



Groin Roundhouse Kick to Side Stomp Kick to the back-of-the-knee. An all-the-way Stomp will allow for dangerous follow-ups

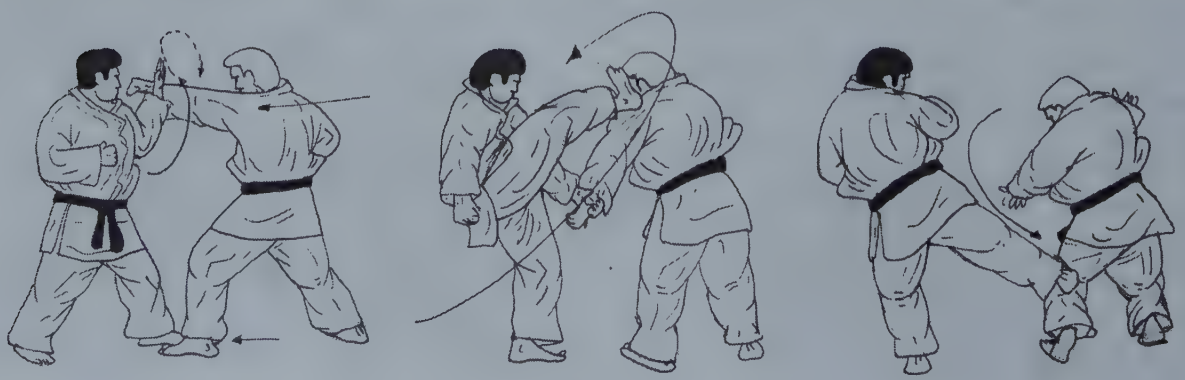
The series that follows shows the use of the *Scrape & Stomp* version of the kick in a release technique from a front choke when pinned against a wall. Contract your neck muscles, lift one arm as high as possible to immobilize one of his choking hands and deliver a fast Essential Lift Kick to his groin. Start immediately to pivot forcefully, keeping your arm up in order to lock his wrist, and let your Lift Kick turn naturally into a high Side Stomp Kick-chamber. Deliver the Scrape-and-Stomp Side Kick to his foot top, while lowering your arm forcefully into his grip, downward elbow strike-style. Keep your foot on his stomped foot, get control of his releasing arms and deliver a side elbow strike to his face.

Groin kick into Scrape & Stomp Side Kick; all in a choke release technique

The figures below show a classic application against a typical traditional *Kung-Fu* type sweep/foot catch that hooks around the front ankle. You neutralize the sweep by placing all your weight forcefully onto the front foot and get into a Side Kick-chamber with the rear leg. Stomp onto the side of his knee, his leg being stuck in place by yours. When drilling, do not stomp all the way down: This is a grave joint attack to be practiced very carefully.

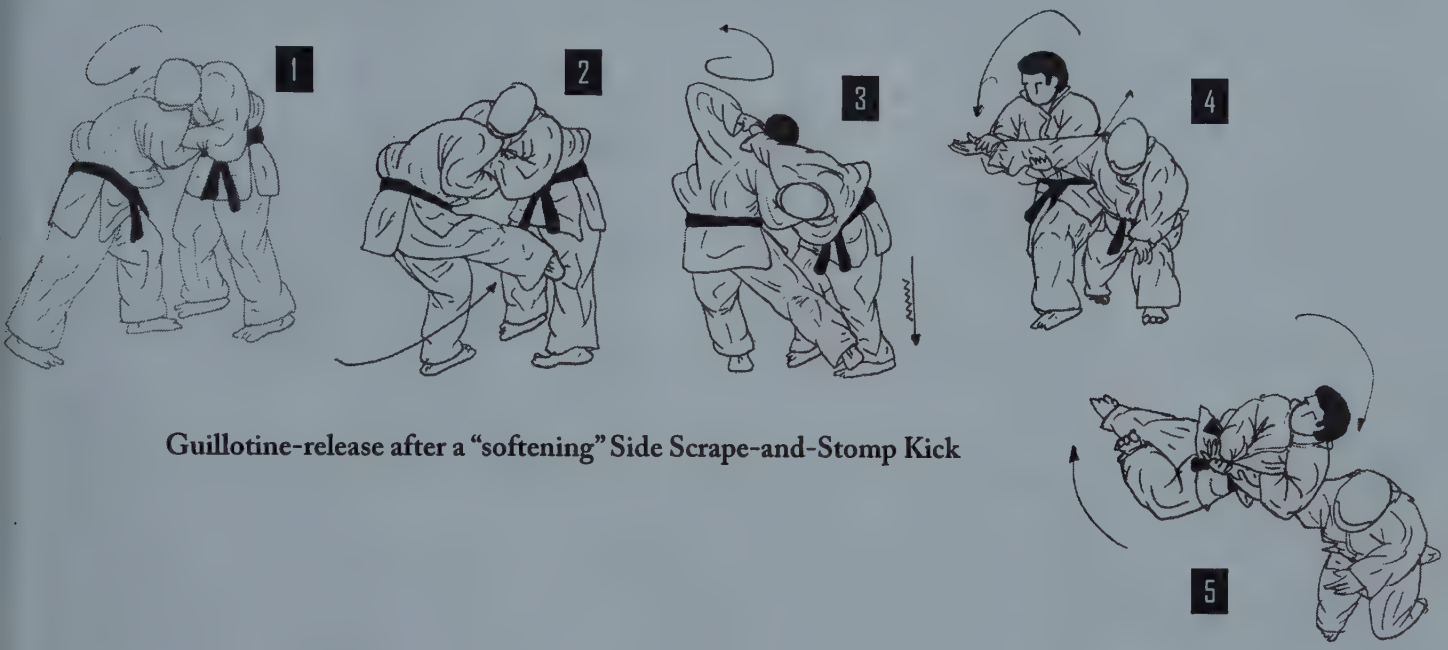
Stomp on an attempted hooking sweep

Here is a modern application of the traditional Crescent Kick/Stomp Kick combination. You block and catch your opponent's jab to pull down on his arm while delivering a full-powered rear-leg Crescent Kick to his head. This will place him sideways and present the back of his knee to the stomp. This is very dangerous for the knee joint, as the kick does not come straight from behind, but slightly to the side. Extreme caution is warranted, especially in training.



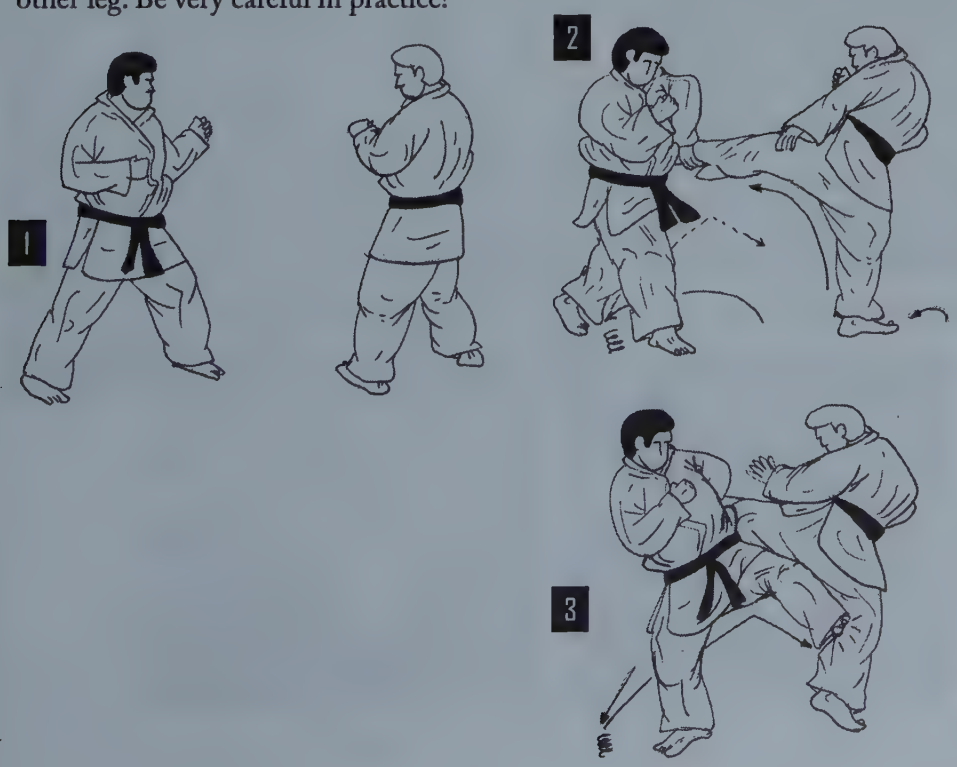
Crescent Kick into Side Stomp

Here is an example of the use of the side "Scrape & Stomp" against a forward neck lock, "guillotine"-type. This is a very serious attack which requires an immediate response: Grip his arms to release the pressure, all the while delivering a low version of the Essential *Front Side Kick* to his knee. Pivot slightly while pulling on his arms and turn into a powerful Scrape & Stomp. Pivot, straighten up and try to break his hold while grinding his ankle into the floor. Complete your pivot and get him into an arm-lock. A great and damaging follow-up is to get him to the floor by jumping (*Yoko Ukemi*-style) with all your bodyweight on his arm-locked elbow.



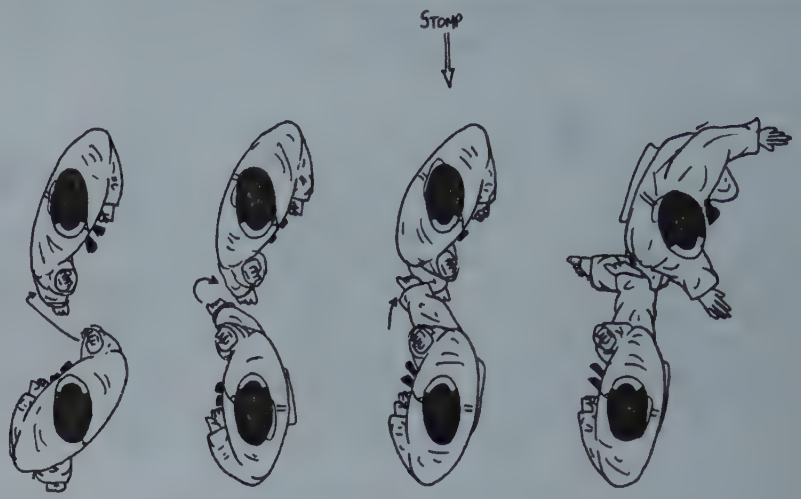
Guillotine-release after a "softening" Side Scrape-and-Stomp Kick

This sequence shows, again, a *cutting* kick, but, this time, in order to underline its follow-up. A lingering stomp allows you to painfully immobilize an opponent while you execute a control technique, in this example an ankle-lock. Your assailant launches a Side Kick that you evade back by pulling the front leg rearwards, in the spirit of *Shorinji-Kempo's Hiki-Mi* mentioned in the introduction. But, as you block and catch the kicking leg, your retreating leg bounces back forward into Side Kick-chamber. You then stomp-kick the back of his knee, while keeping control of his kicking leg. Drive his knee joint into the floor, drill it in place and execute a painful twisting ankle-lock on his other leg. Be very careful in practice!

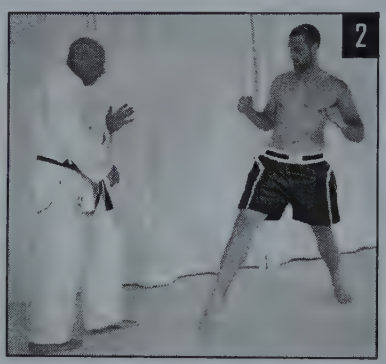


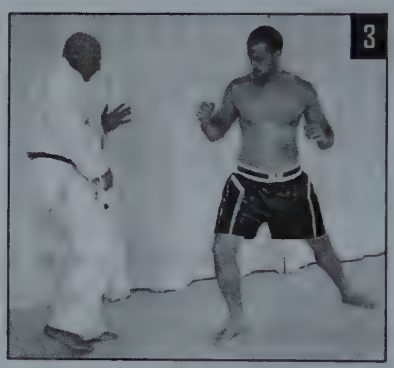
Keep the painful Stomp on for control techniques

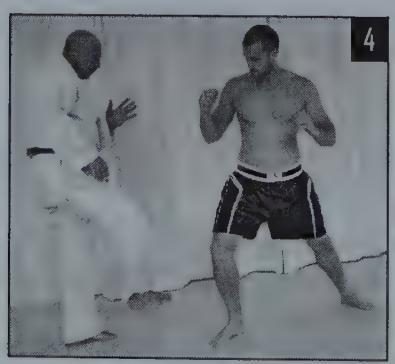
Last but certainly not least, this is a variation of the kick in which the trajectory is slightly curved in order to catch the side of your opponent's knee that you are facing. The principle is similar to that of the "Curved Side Kick" mentioned in our book about Essential Kicks and is illustrated by a sky-view comparison (below). It is kind of a Feint Kick, a bit surprising and often quite effective. In this example, it helps to buckle the opponent's knee, in spite of the fact you come from his front. So it goes: In opposite stances, you evade a rear-leg Front Kick by shuffling backwards just enough to avoid being touched. While your assailant lowers his kicking leg, you lift your front foot and stomp the side of his knee as he lands. In order to do that, you'll need to curve slightly the trajectory of the stomp in something akin to a mild Outside Crescent Kick move. Follow up.

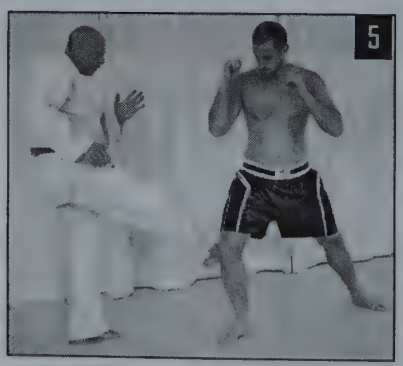


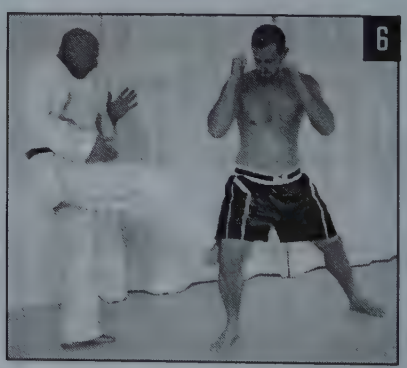
Curve the development of the kick to place it in stomping position



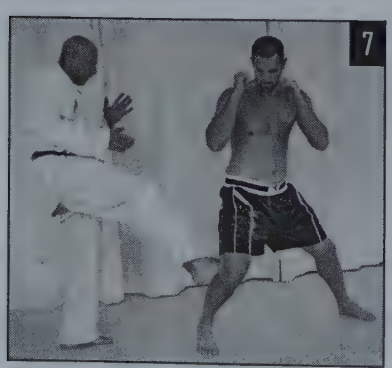


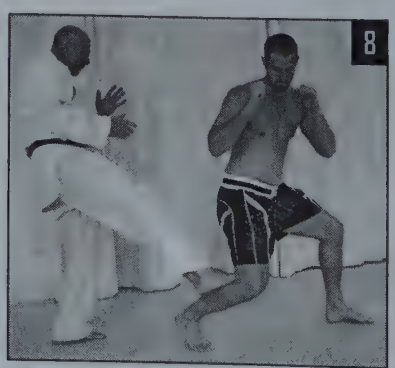


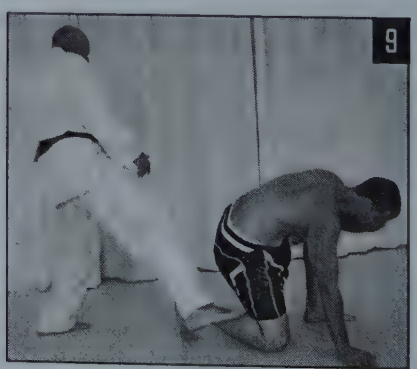




Curve the trajectory to get to the back side of his knee

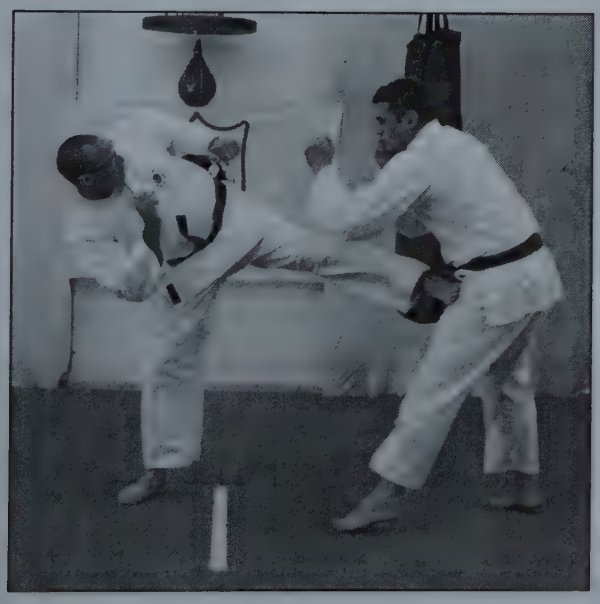






Illustrative photos

Drilling the Stomp Side Kick – *Roy Faige*



Stomping Side Stop-Kick to the hip

Low Side Kick on the author by *Mishka Daglietsky*, restrained by an elastic band for drilling purposes

14. The Low Back Kick

(Ushiro Gedan Geri - Karatedo)

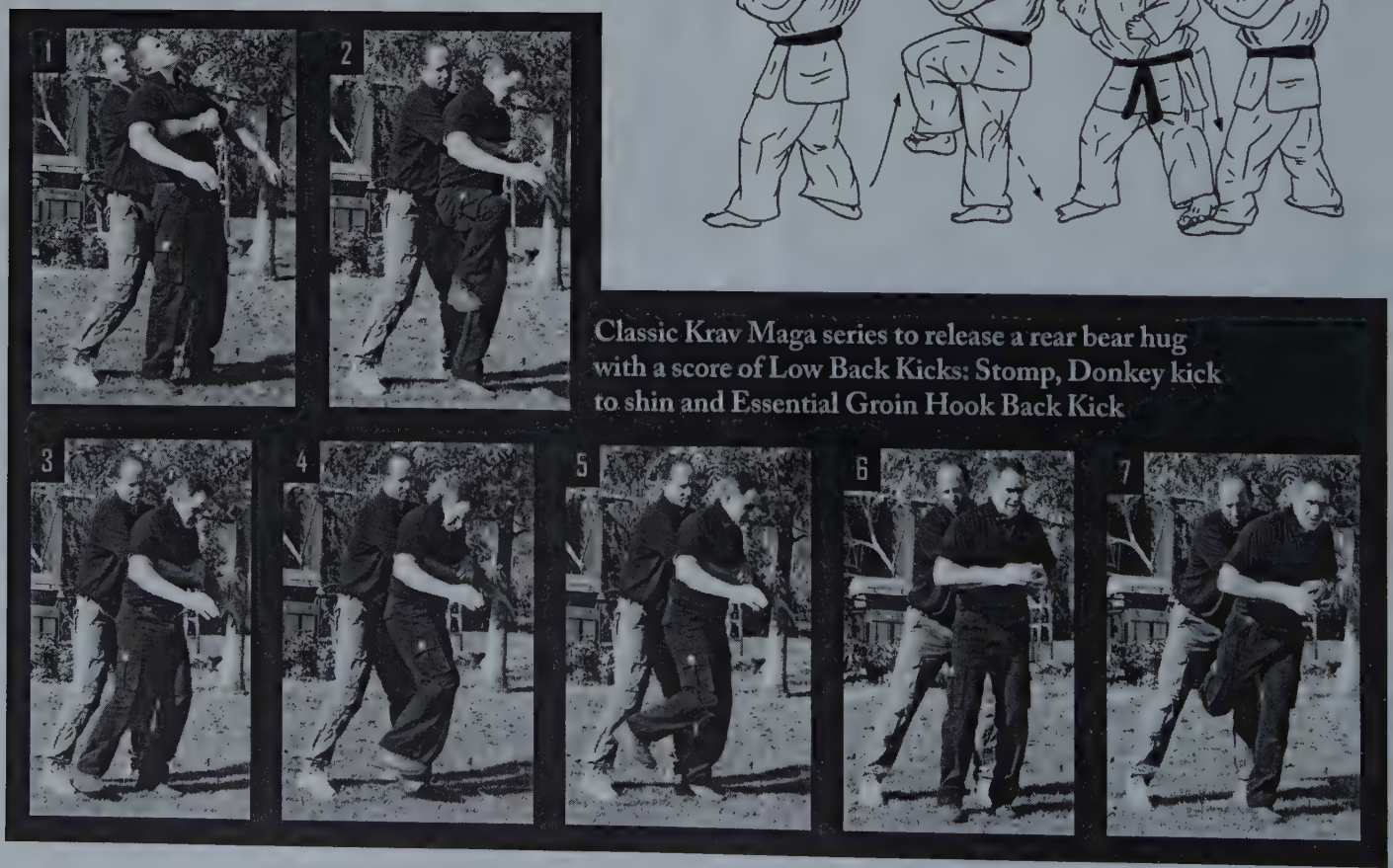
General

This is a very simple-to-perform kick, with less hip movement than the corresponding Essential Penetrating Back Kick. The low kick can be executed with various amounts of chambering and of upper body leaning, as the circumstances dictate. This is a very important kick for self-defense situations, as—in real life—chances of being assailed from behind are unfortunately significant. There are numerous practical variations of the kick, and the main ones will be presented here. Our previous work about "Essential Kicks" includes a full chapter about Back Kicks. Most of these basic Essential Back Kicks can be delivered *low* as well.

Description

This shows the classic delivery of the kick, just as a regular Back Kick: high chambering and hip penetrating power. Chamber back, of course.

But there is a *stomp* version against a closer opponent (below), in which there is no chambering back. It will be presented briefly, but separately in a coming section.



Classic Krav Maga series to release a rear bear hug with a score of Low Back Kicks: Stomp, Donkey kick to shin and Essential Groin Hook Back Kick

The series below shows a somewhat Upward version of the kick (*Keage* in *Karatedo*), aiming back with a more or less straight leg for the shin or knee of the opponent. No chambering is needed, but the upper body leans forward to stay loosely in a straight line with the kicking leg.

There are other basic variations of the Essential Back Kick that can be adapted to the Low Back Kick, like the *hooked* finish, the *uppercut* delivery or the *spin-back* preparation. Some examples of these basic principles will be presented briefly in the Self-defense sub-section.

Key points

- Always chamber up before kicking.
- Look back *while* kicking: As you are in a precarious position, do not lose time by looking first.

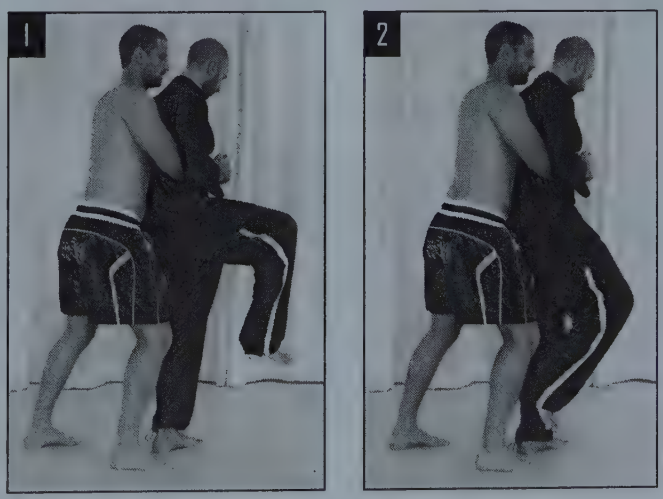
Targets

Knee (right), shins, thigh and groin.

Donkey Kick to the knee

Typical application

The photos below show the very useful "Bent-leg Pendulum"-variation, often called the *Donkey Kick*: As your opponent catches you with an underarm bear hug from behind, you take control of his arms and lift the slightly bent leg forward. You then kick back towards his shin while bending the leg a little bit more for added impact. Connect with the heel and lean forward while kicking.



Low Back Kick to the shin as a rear bear hug-release

This shows a more classic application, including a spin-back. This is a high/low combination based on luring in a counter-attacking opponent: Launch a high reverse punch to your opponent's face, but immediately switch your weight back rearwards, lean back and start your spin-back on the spot. Your upper body is therefore slipping away from his eventual reverse punch-counter. You deliver your Spin-back Back Kick to his front knee, while keeping your upper body away. A good follow-up could be a back-fist strike, making use of the spinning momentum.

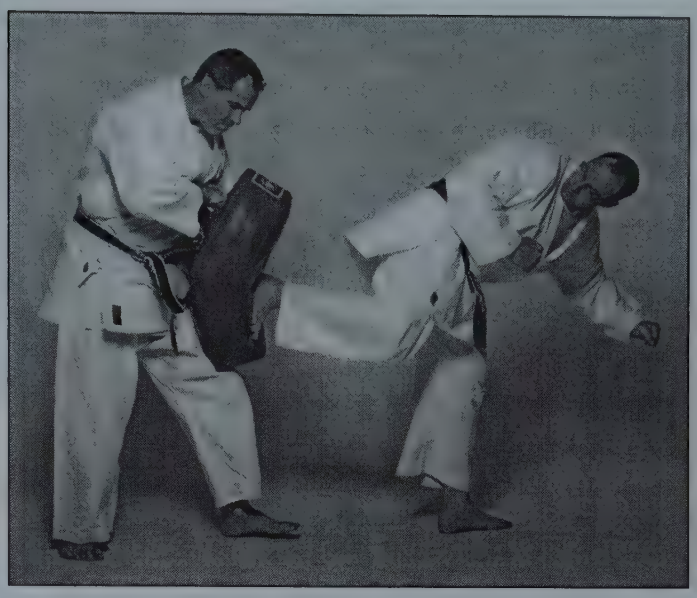
Spin-back Low Back Kick to the knee

The photos below show the judicious use of the kick in a close combat situation: As you are close to the opponent, you jam the power of his possible punches by rolling into him and smothering him while spinning. All the while, deliver a spin-back circular downward elbow to the head. Bend forward to immediately deliver a Lifting (Donkey-style) Back Kick to his unprotected groin. Of course, note that other Low Back Kicks or Stomp Kicks would do the job as well. Keep kicking to finish him up.

Jam him with an aggressive spin-back; hit high, then low

Specific training

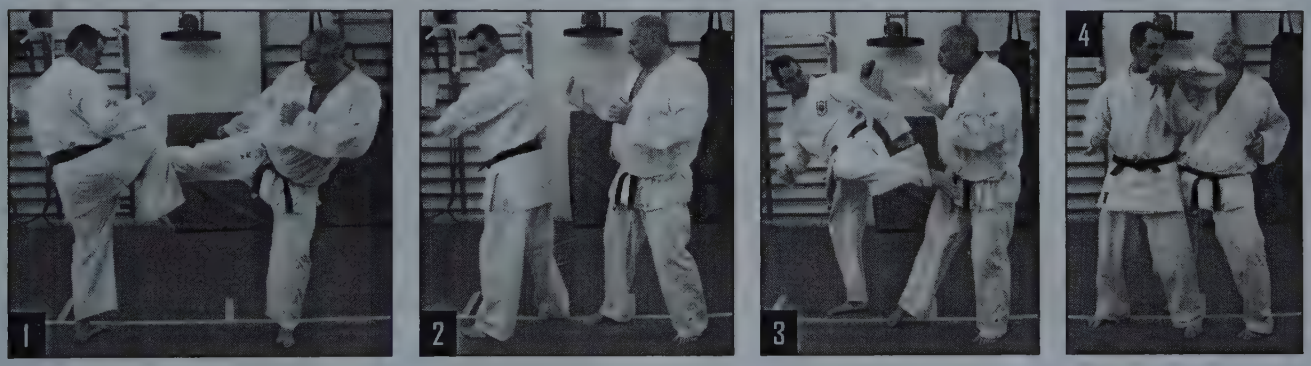
- Train for power on the standing heavy bag and held-up tire. This is a power kick that requires power training.
- Train for automatic "no-peek"-delivery on the standing bag and tire.
- Work with a partner is always productive (right).



A body shield held by a partner is an excellent drill target

Self-defense

These photos show the classic *Spin-back* Back Kick to the opponent's groin, after a shin block of his own "Low Kick". Finish off with an elbow strike.

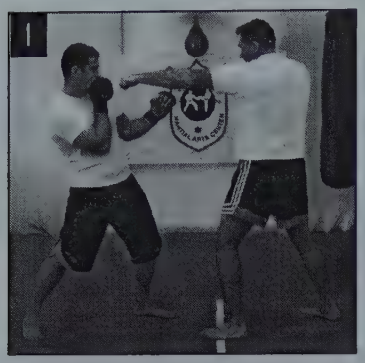


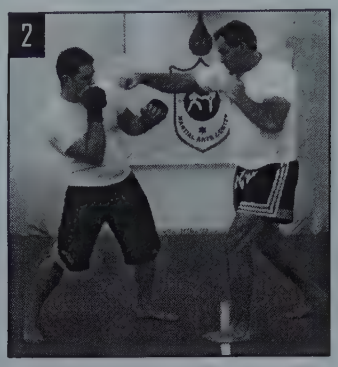
Spin back into Low Back Kick and elbow strike

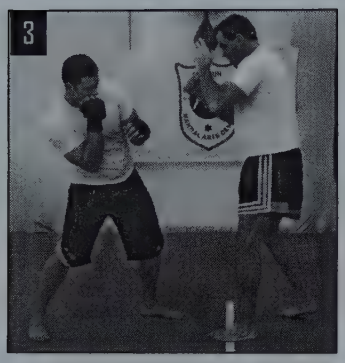
The Essential *Uppercut* version of the kick is presented below, as a timing groin-stop of a high kicker.

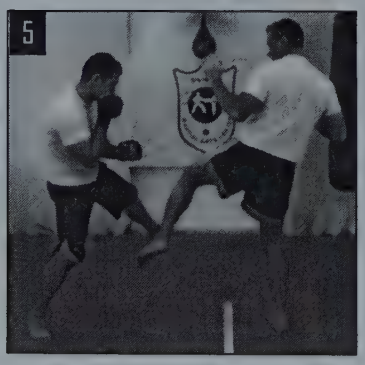
The Uppercut Back Kick comes straight up to the target

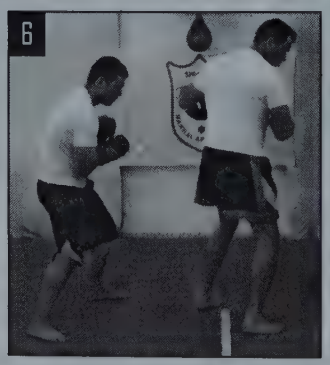
The spin-back variation is extremely powerful and useful in all kinds of situations. Another example, in which the spin *starts as a Low Roundhouse attack*, is presented below: Kick through with a Low Roundhouse and spin-back into the Low Back Kick.

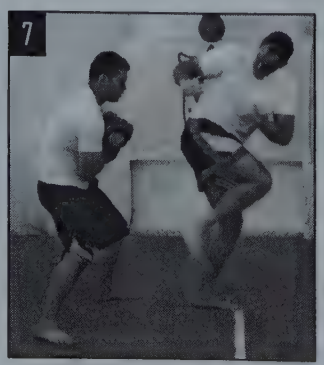












A Low Roundhouse through the inside front knee will allow you to start your spin-back while the opponent is off-balance, both physically and mentally

A classic <u>offensive</u> example of the Essential *Hooked* version of the Back Kick is presented below at left. A Cross-step back-fist/Spin-back back-fist combination places you in the sweet spot for a Hooking Back Kick between your opponent's legs.

A <u>defensive</u> example is presented below at right: Evade a Front Kick forward-and-out, and hop into a Hooking Back Kick between your assailant's legs, *from behind.*

The kick goes up, then hooks back forwards

Evade forward and out for the perfect starting position

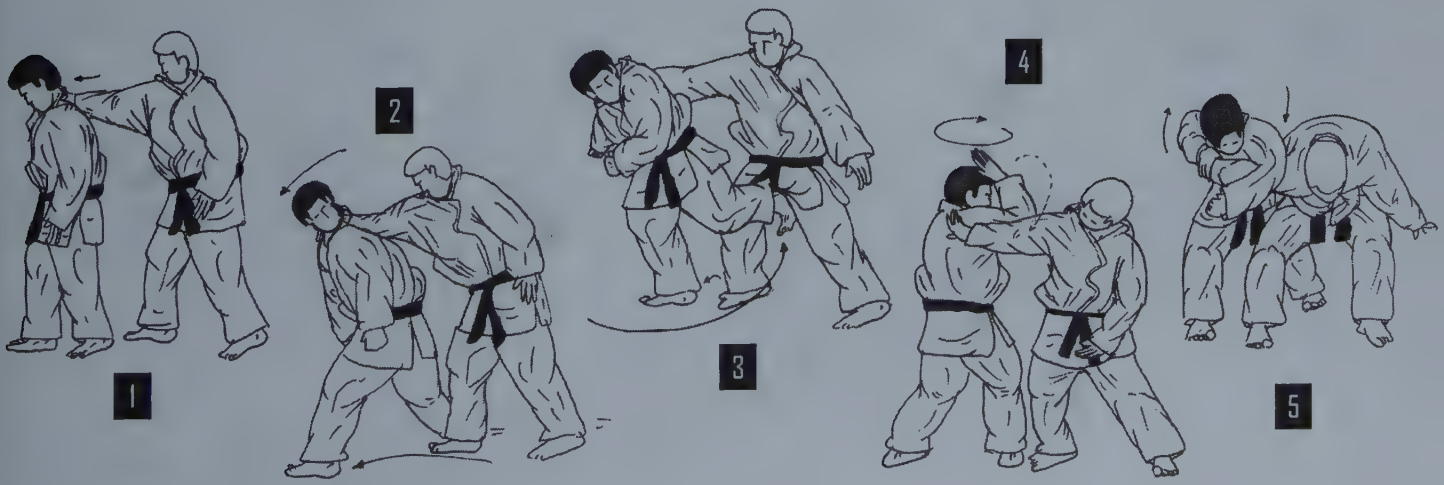
The Essential *Back Ghost Lift Kick* is a deceptive maneuver delivered with the body turning away as if you were fleeing your assailant. It simply lifts fast and unexpectedly, but without power, into the opponent's groin. These photos show how it is delivered offensively after a high punching feint.

The unexpected Back Ghost Lift Kick

The figures below show an application of the "*Donkey Kick*" variation in an *Aiki-jitsu* technique against an opponent grabbing both your wrists from behind (*Ushiro Ryote Tori* attack). In fact, the kick will serve as a softener to ease the execution of the classic *Aikido's Juji Nage* throw. Kick back with a Donkey Kick to his knee or shin and lower the leg onto his foot in a Back Stomp kick. Pivot in between his arms and perform the "self-inflicted" arm-lock that turns into an easy throw.

Back kick and Back Stomp as the start of a rear wrists hold-release

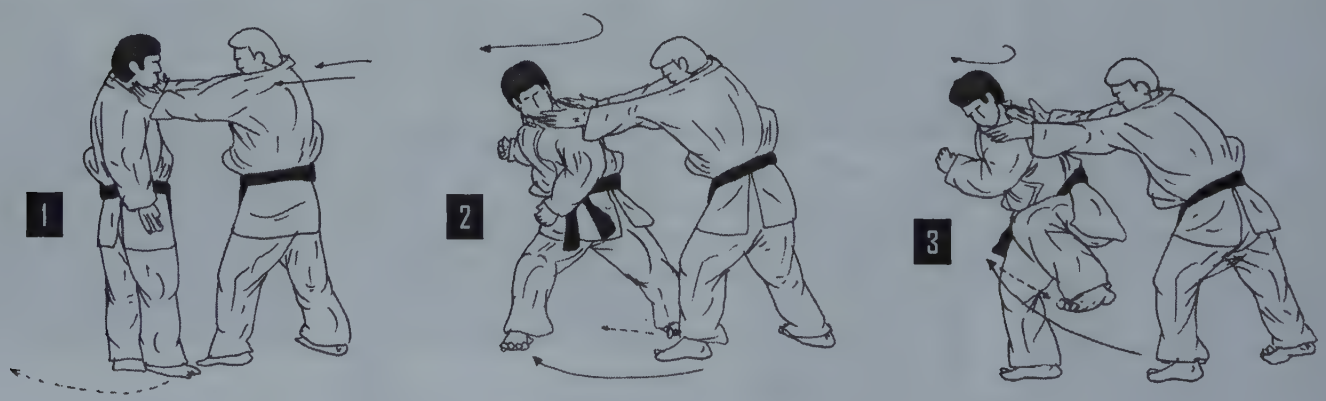
The series that follows shows another application of the Groin back Kick, but from further away; it is therefore less a *Hooked* Back Kick and more of an *Uppercut* Back Kick (See Essential Book of Martial Arts Kicks). As your assailant grabs your collar from behind and pushes forward, do not resist. Step and lean forward to put him off-balance, and suddenly kick back to his groin. Pivot energetically to the outside of his grabbing arm and hit the elbow joint with your forearm. Continue your spin-back move to take control of his arm and get him into an arm-lock.



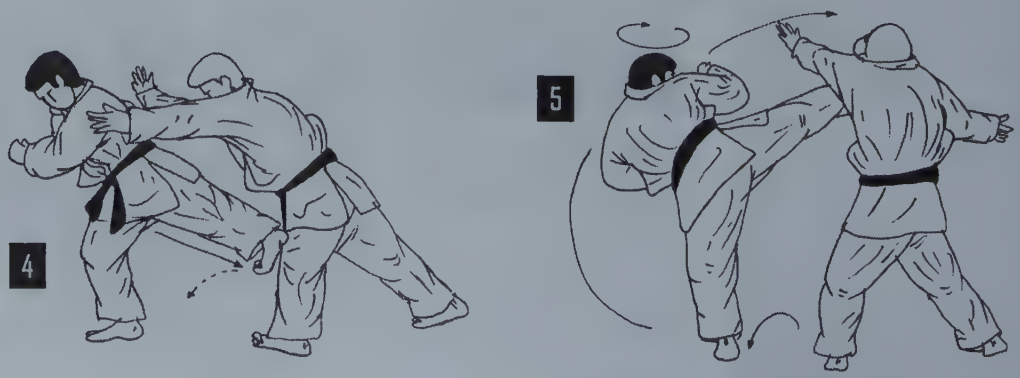
The figures below show the use of a hooked variation of the Donkey Kick, against another rear attack. The finishing touch of the technique will be, again, a crossed-arm self-inflicted arm-lock throw. As your assailant grabs your wrist from behind while trying to choke you with his other arm (*Aikido*'s formal *Kubishime* attack), catch his choking elbow immediately to relieve the pressure. Then, lift your other arm to the side while stepping sideways and forwards. This move can be accompanied by a *buttocks' strike* to the opponent's general groin area. Deliver an Upward Bent-leg Back Kick to his groin, while "*hooking*" into the target. Lift your grabbed arm over your head and grab his grabbing hand with your other hand. Go down into *Ju-jitsu* hip throw position close to your opponent and perform the dangerous arm-locked Shoulder Throw.

Groin Hooking Back Kick to loosen an assailant's grip

This is a last example of the use of the classic penetrating version of the kick in a front attack situation. As an assailant reaches to choke you from the front with both hands, retreat while pivoting and leaning back to place him off-balance before he can strengthen his hold. Chamber your front leg and Back-kick his front knee. You can follow up with a Spin-back Hook Kick, using the other leg.



Retreat and lean back; then chamber high and kick powerfully through his knee



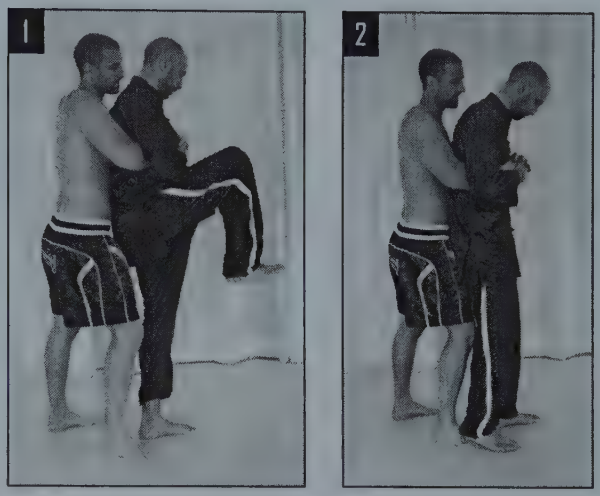
15. The Low Back Stomp Kick

General

This is a very simple kick, already introduced earlier in the treatise (page 119). It is a simple Stomp, just like the Front- or Side-stomp Kicks, but this time delivered slightly behind you. Therefore, we will just present two detailed applications relevant to MMA and Self-defense, as an illustration.

Description

Lift your knee up high, and, from this chambering position, stomp onto and through your (rear) opponent's upper foot or ankle; as if crushing a bug. See the photos at right for the start of a rear bear hug-release. Follow-up techniques are presented in the applications.



The Back Stomp Kick; chamber high

Typical application

The series below shows the kick used to free yourself from a rear underarm bear hug. It is followed by a classic takedown release: Chamber high and stomp forcefully on your opponent's foot, placing your stomping foot in the most practical position, usually slightly tilted. Connect with your heel. You can conceivably also scrape your opponent's shin while going down, but it reduces the total energy of the stomp. Bend immediately forward to grab your opponent's (other) ankle in between your legs. Pull his leg up while pushing him back with your buttocks, to make him fall on his back. Keep hold of his ankle as you immediately back-stomp-kick (again) his exposed groin this time. Note that the whole combination can be preceded by a rear head butt (not illustrated) for further overwhelming the assailant.

Back Stomp Kick, then takedown; then groin Back Stomp

Self defense

This illustration shows another finish to the previous technique: after (the rear head butt and) the forceful stomp, you catch the palm of his hand and liberate it down while you pivot. You twist his wrist in a typical *NiKyo* lock (*Aikido, JuJitsu*) while kicking his shin (Low Soccer Front Kick) and completing your pivot. You now use your other hand to catch his little finger (pinky) pointing upwards. You bring him down with the finger lock and can finish him up with further kicks. Of course, the proficient *AikiJitsuka* could proceed with the classical *Nikkyo* attack or one of its variations. The "pinky" move is easy and devastating enough though.

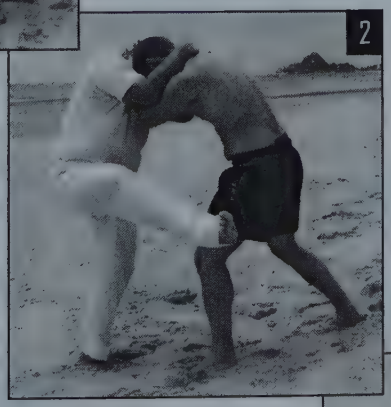
Use the lingering Stomp to free your hand and place a painful and humiliating finger-lock

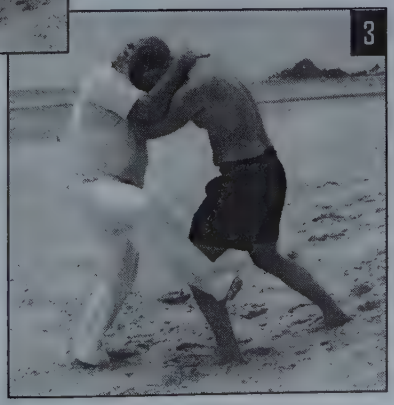
16. The Heel-Outside Low Kick

Ha Che Cha Gi (Hapkido), Tendangan Ular Sanca (Pencak Silat)

General

This is very interesting kick that is not practiced enough, in my opinion. I have seen variations of this kick used successfully in very practical Korean, Chinese and Indonesian Arts. It comes at an unexpected angle, and is pretty powerful *if one takes the time to drill it adequately.* It could be described as a hybrid Crescent Kick/Downward Heel Kick, with some leg bending and honing onto specific sensitive targets. Although it takes practice to make this kick efficient and naturally-flowing, it is an important kick for close-quarters situations (See below), and it should be part of the serious kicker's arsenal for self-defense situations.





A devastating kick to the knee in a clinch situation

Description

The illustration below shows the full-chambered way to deliver the kick. This is the way to *start* practicing it, in order to get a feeling of all the components imparting it power. Drill it this way, and when you have mastered it, you can start to gradually reduce the extent of the chambering both in height and in arc-width. Lift the knee sideways, as if for an Essential Side Front Kick, and extend it high on your side. Your arm can be inside or outside the leg. You then lower the leg forcefully down and diagonally, while bending it to get the right range to the target. At the same time you lean sideways with your upper torso to add to the power of the kick. You connect with the heel and kick into the target. The feeling at impact is that of a hooking "Donkey Kick". Drilling the kick on a bag is imperative to understand it and to start developing power.

The classical orthodox fully-developed Heel-outside Low Kick

Key points

- Keep your guard up: you are close to your opponent.
- Bend the knee at the last moment before impact for more power.
- Keep your upper body immobile in the first stages of chambering.

Targets

This kick requires hitting specific sensitive targets only.

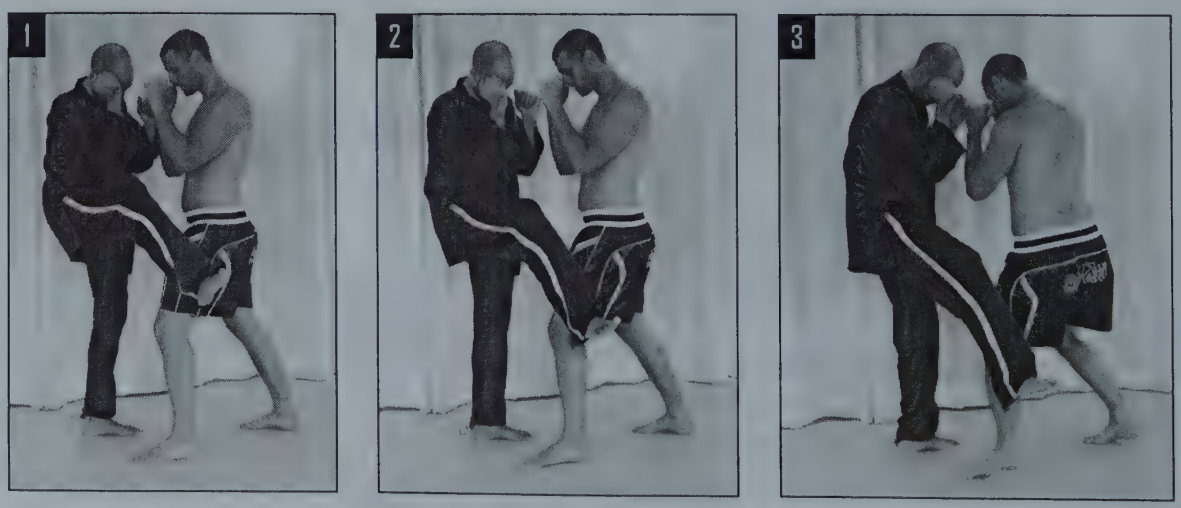
The side of the knee and of the thigh. The ankle. An interesting variation calls for hitting the kidneys of an opponent in front of you (See Photo 2 on page 129), or standing sideways to you. Of course, in opposite sideways stance, the kick can also target the groin.

Some styles of *Pencak Silat* target the back of the calf from the front.

Unorthodox targets: Kidneys, groin, calf

Typical application

These photos show the more practical version of the kick, with less chambering, to be practiced only after you have mastered the classical full delivery. Hitting the knee joint will both be painful and compromise his balance.



Fast and efficient: The Heel-outside Low Kick

As mentioned, the kick can target the kidneys, as illustrated below, after a reverse punch.

The interesting attack-to-the-back version

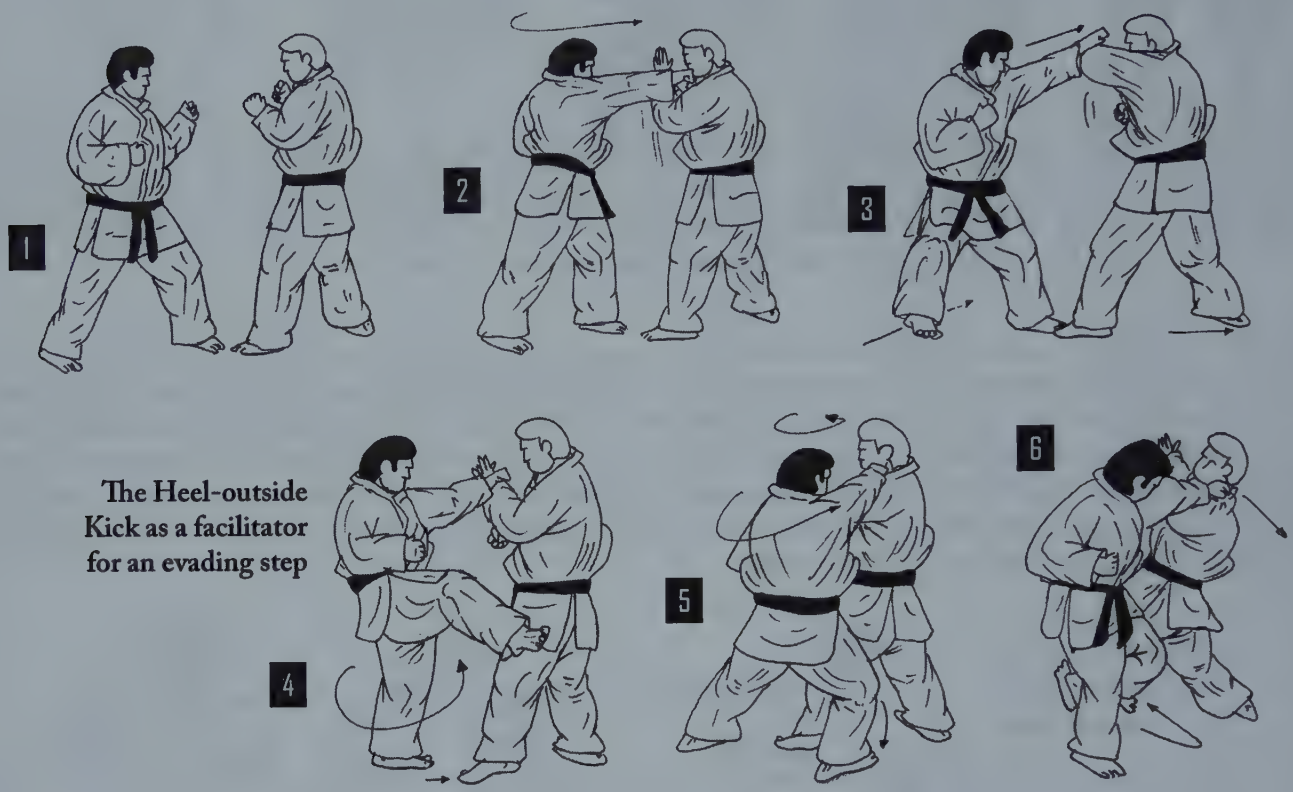
The kick is extremely useful in a clinch situation, as part of, or the beginning of a combination to take back the advantage. As mentioned before, the kick is kind of a hybrid between a Crescent Kick and a Downward Heel Kick, with a pinch of "Hooking". We shall show, to compare, two versions of the kick in the same clinching position: one with more and one with less "crescent-kick" emphasis. The figures below show the Crescent Kick variation of the kick. We could have presented the "Low Crescent Kick" in a separate section of the book, but this kick is probably only effective enough in this clinching situation where your opponent is grounded by your hold. So, this paragraph will be all we shall say about the *Low Crescent Kick.*

More a Crescent Kick than a Heel-outside Kick

The series below, for the sake of completeness, will show as a comparison the very effective straighter classic Heel-outside Low Kick in the same clinch. Of course, there are infinite intermediate deliveries in between the Heel-outside Low Kick and the Low Crescent Kick.

The classic Outside-heel Low Kick in a clinch

This series will show an offensive application of the kick, with a naturally evading step resulting in the foot position after impact. The kick is a painful maneuver covering the body movement; it is also a welcome break in the high/high/high punching combo. Pictures will be worth a thousand words. Lunge towards your opponent with a reverse punch to the face, and start delivering the Heel-outside Kick with your rear leg, *while jabbing towards* his eyes and leaving your fist up to limit his field of vision. Kick the side of his front knee or thigh. Lower the foot deep to his outside and twist your hips powerfully, so as to connect with a jab (Typical *Kizami Tsuki – Karatedo*) to the side of his face. A natural follow-up would be an Outside Leg Reap Throw (*O Soto Gari – Judo*).



The Heel-outside Kick as a facilitator for an evading step

Specific training

As mentioned, this kick is somewhat unnatural and requires a lot of drilling to become effective and usable in combat. But once mastered, it is surprisingly powerful while coming from an unexpected angle. It makes it worth the training.

- Work for familiarity and power on the heavy bag, both standing and hanging, at different relevant heights.
- Train with a padded partner to learn to discern the opportunities of its use.

Drill on the hanging heavy bag and on a bag you hold as you would an opponent

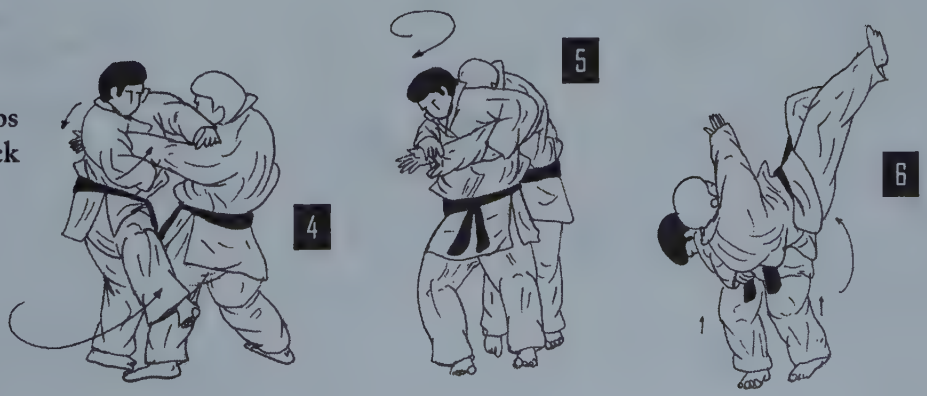
Self defense

Once this technique becomes natural, it is very easy to use in any close-combat situation. The fact that the upper body can be bent sideways gives the technique a certain amount of evading qualities. The figures below show how to duck and catch a jab from the outside, and then follow up with a hammer-fist strike to the lower ribs and a rear-leg Heel-outside Kick to the side of the knee. Follow up with a full-hipped downward hand strike to his neck for example.

Rib strike followed by kick to leg, while leaning out

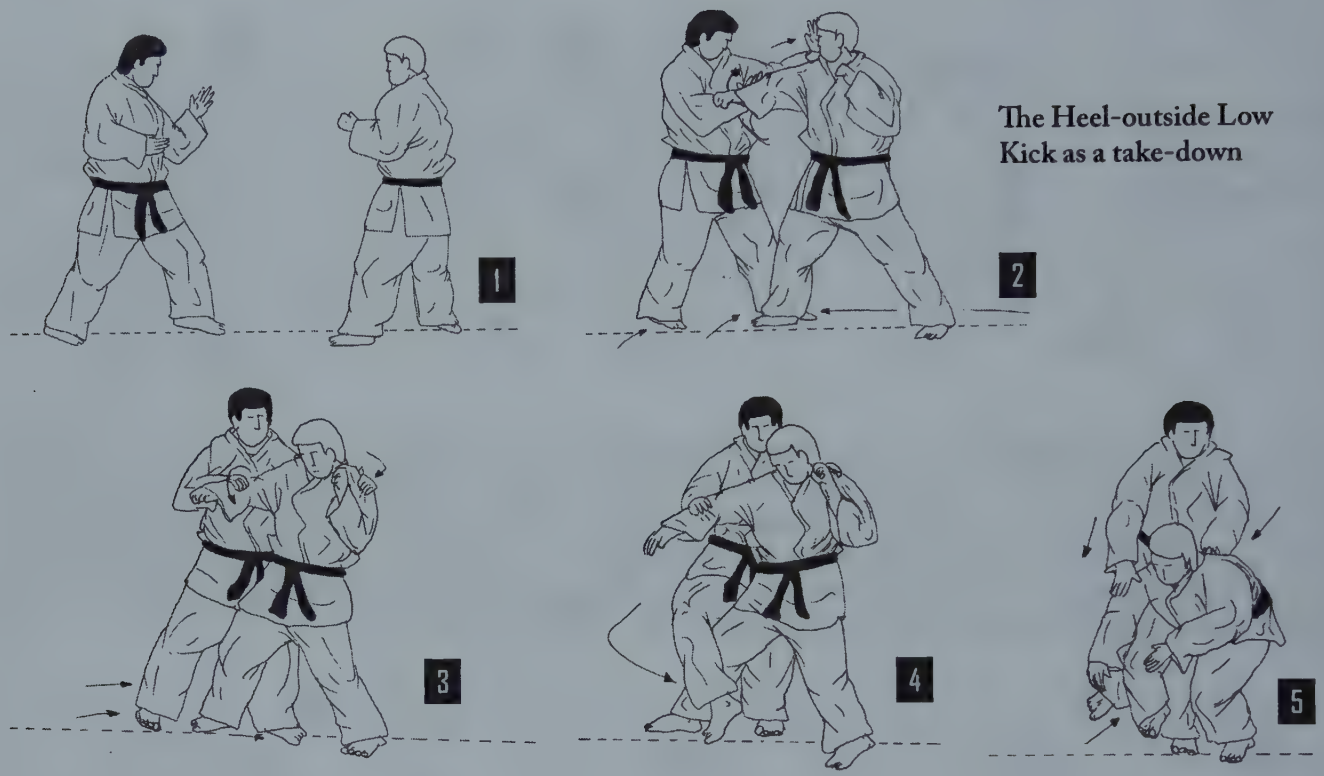
As we have seen before, these Low Kicks that intrinsically lack power are very useful to help set up arm-locks, chokes, throws or even misdirecting combinations. This sequence shows the use of the kick as a painful diversion to allow for the setting of an arm-lock: Block a diagonal stick attack to your head by slipping forward and inside the strike. Catch and roll your arm over his stick arm while delivering a circular fully-hipped elbow strike to his face. Use your rear leg to deliver a Heel-outside Kick to the side/back of his calf/knee, *while setting up the arm-lock*. Bend back violently to hurt his joint, and then pivot naturally into an underarm hip throw.

The Heel-outside Kick helps setting up a painful arm-lock



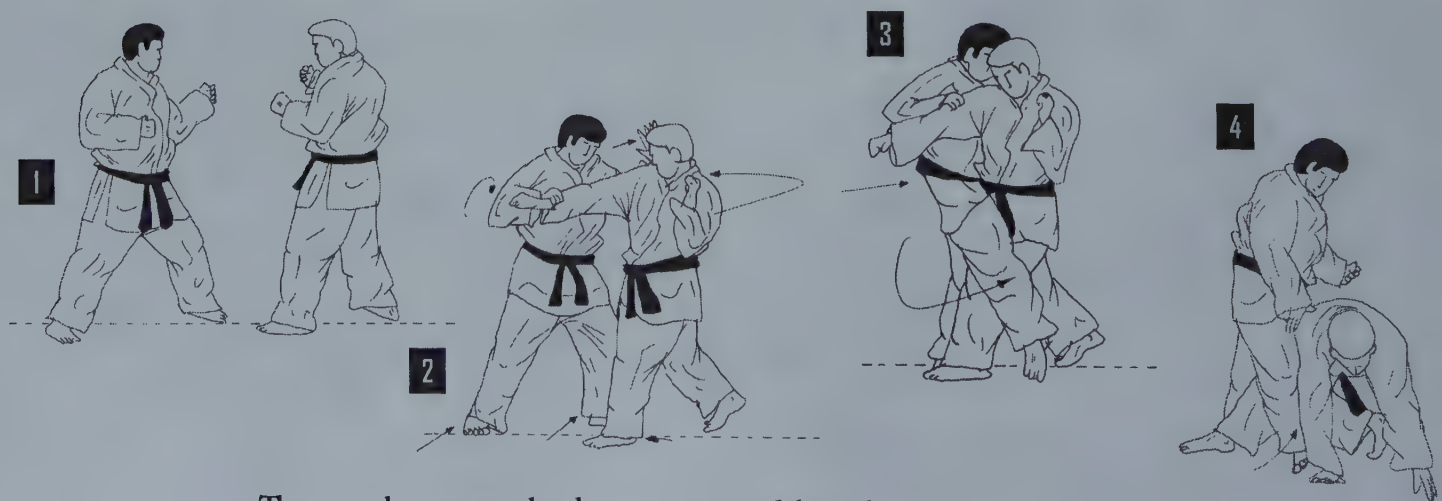
The kick can be used also as the hard "kicking" version of *hooking take-downs.* In that case, you execute the technique with the mind-set of kicking with your heel anything coming your way. The first illustration series shows the regular take-down, while the following one shows the more dangerous cross-legged version. Both versions are based on the outside evasion against a punch.

These illustrations show the forward outside evasion on a lunge punch while you control the attacking arm. You then stick to his back and Hook-kick his front leg with your rear while pushing him forward. Chamber high and kick hard; follow up as he falls on his face.



The Heel-outside Low Kick as a take-down

The figures below show the same forward evasion to the outside of his reverse punch. Get control of his attacking arm and simultaneously strike him with a palm strike for example. Hook-kick his forward leg with your rear leg and push him forward. His legs are crossed and the fall is very dangerous for his knee joint. Again, if the situation warrants it, chamber high and kick hard.



The same dangerous take-down on a crossed-legged opponent

17. The Angular Kick to the Knee

General

This is a very practical small kick, not very efficient in itself because it lacks in power, but fantastic as an opener or as an attrition kick. It is kind of a hybrid between the Essential angled "Instep Angular Front Kick" and the Essential *Outside* Crescent Kick, but delivered at low levels. By assiduous practice, the power behind the kick can be greatly improved, and it becomes a very painful kick that will surprise many opponents. We will only present one application for this somewhat anecdotal kick.

Description

Simply lift the foot into an *Outside Crescent* towards the target, preferably the inside knee. It must be untelegraphed, and the power of the kick comes from a hip torque at the last moment. Connect to sensitive points only, with the knife edge or the top of the foot, just like for a classic Outside Crescent Kick. The figure below shows a rear-leg kick, but the principle for the front-leg version stays the same.

The rear-leg Low Angular Kick

Typical Application

This is a very useful little kick as an attrition move to the opponent's knees. As such, it is better done as a fast front-leg move, keeping your upper body immobile.

The illustrations that follow will show such an attrition kick, but followed by a very typical follow-up. This is probably the most useful classical use of the kick. Use the Angular Kick to hit the inside knee of your opponent, *thus opening his legs*. Do not lower the leg, but, in an uninterrupted move, straighten the leg up along his thigh into a naturally developing Front Groin Kick. You can follow up by hitting his exposed back neck as he bends forward from the pain.

From his kicked knee, kick directly up into his groin

1

2

3

Key points

- Do not move the upper body and explode into the movement.
- Keep your guard up.
- Just before impact, invert the rotation direction of the hips.
- Always follow up.

Targets

The inside knee preferably. But also the outside knee, side of the thighs and upper ankles.

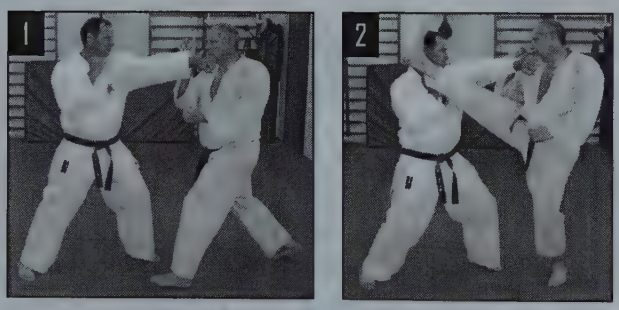
Specific training

The power of this kick can be greatly enhanced by thorough training: practice on the standing heavy bag or upheld tire (below). Drill for speed, power and no tell-tales.

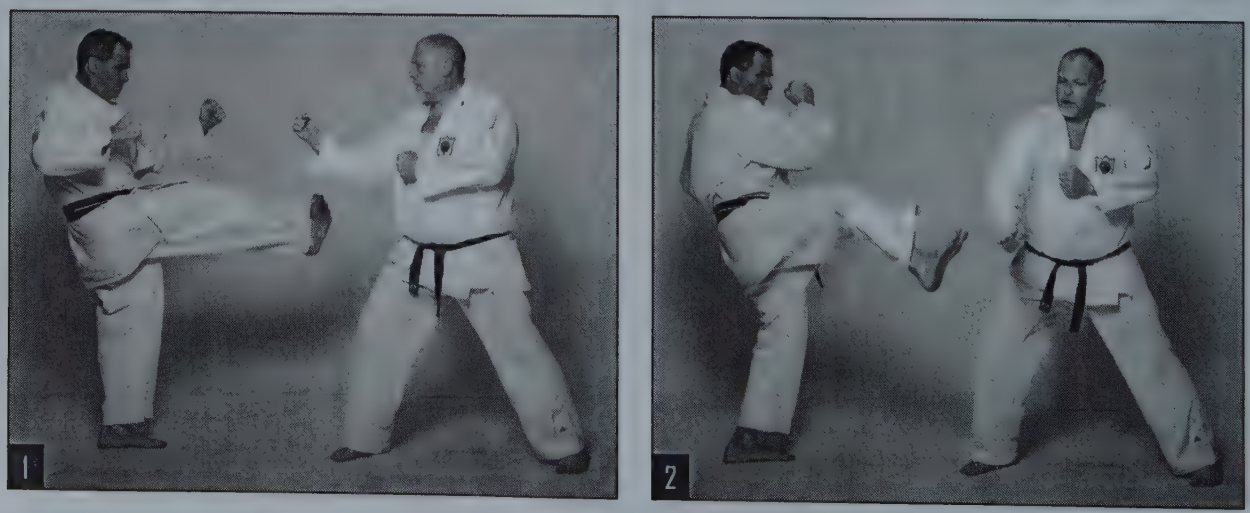
Overall kicking stamina will help a lot the power of "small" kicks like this one. Methodical PLYO –FLEX training is warmly recommended.

Power drilling is essential to making this kick an effective one

Illustrative photos



The Essential basic high Angular Front Kick



The Essential Outside Crescent Kick

18. The Front Pushing Stop-Kick to Knee-Scrape

General

This is a very interesting kick, although slightly anecdotal, and very specifically to be used as a counter to a Spin-back Kick. It is basically a Front *Pushing* Stop-kick with a natural follow-up, which I have discovered in *Wing Chun Kung Fu* practice. It is a bit esoteric, but extremely efficient when mastered and used judiciously. As this work is aiming at being encyclopedic, it was important to record this variation's existence.

Specific training

- The kick can be seriously drilled only with a partner. Practice the Stop-kick first, leaving your foot on his buttock (no chambering-back of the stop-kick!). Then start practicing the whole movement carefully.
- You can practice the scraping down on a relatively light and pliable standing bag held by a partner.

Description

The figures here show how to Front-stop-kick the buttock of your opponent as he spins back and as he starts lifting his leg for a Spin-back Hook Kick (in this example). As soon as you have connected, you start scraping down along his thigh, pushing down forcefully until you reach the back of his knee. You then Stomp down for a very painful and dangerous finish.

19. The Flying Stomp Kick

General

This kick could have been classified in future books under Flying Kicks or even Suicide Kicks. We chose to place it here, because of the *stomping* angle. This is a very simple kick to describe but acrobatic, unnecessarily dangerous to perform, and—it should be said—a bit of a show-off. But it has been used very effectively in prominent MMA contests, where it has proved it is definitely a worthwhile punishing maneuver. Like most spectacular kicks, it also has a great psychological effect on the opponent. In this case, it also has an overpowering physical side, which would make many opponents squirm.

Key points

The dangers you need to be aware of when performing this kick are:

- You could be kicked in the groin while jumping up.
- You could lose your balance.

Description

These photos show how you jump high and lift your legs as high as possible in order to "fly" over your grounded opponent's guarding knees. You then land, with one foot beside his body, while the other stomps with most of your body weight onto anything in range: head, ribs, limbs,...

A dangerous but intimidating and crushing Kick

You can also, more dangerously, connect with both feet onto your opponent. You would probably fall yourself and have to roll to safety after an even more punishing stomp.

Specific training

- Practice (lightly) on a moving grounded partner, to learn to adjust for distance.
- Practice the precision of stomping by performing on a lying tire: one foot out of the tire, the second stomps a mark on the tire. You can simulate the obstacle of the opponent's leg with a lying heavy bag to jump over (right).
- Drill for "power" on a lying focus pad, a lying bag or a lying tire.
- Practice jumps with airborne knee lifts in the air: Try to hit your pectorals, or even more, lift them outside your arms.

Drill on a tire; jump over a bag

Jump and lift knees as high as possible; arms inside (left)

High jumps for practice; arms outside (right)

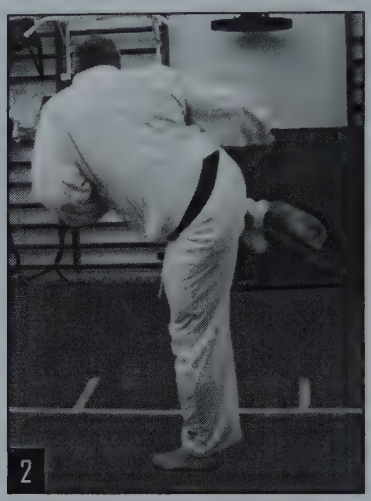
- Breaking practice, eventually (*Tame Shiwari*).

A crushing Kick indeed

- Certainly Plyometric Exercises!

20 Other Low Kicks

As mentioned at the beginning of this book, nearly all **Essential Kicks** can be delivered to the low gate, and hitherto become "Low Kicks". The kicks presented above are especially suitable, or very specific. We have also endeavored to use examples and applications to illustrate the specifics and principles of low kicking. There are more kicks and variations, and we have not presented here, for example, the specific Groin Kicks presented as Essential Kicks in our previous work. Some Essential Kicks are nearly only usable for groin attacks and could have been added here as Low Kicks. Just a few illustrative photos follow to whet the reader's appetite.



The Uppercut Hook Back Kick

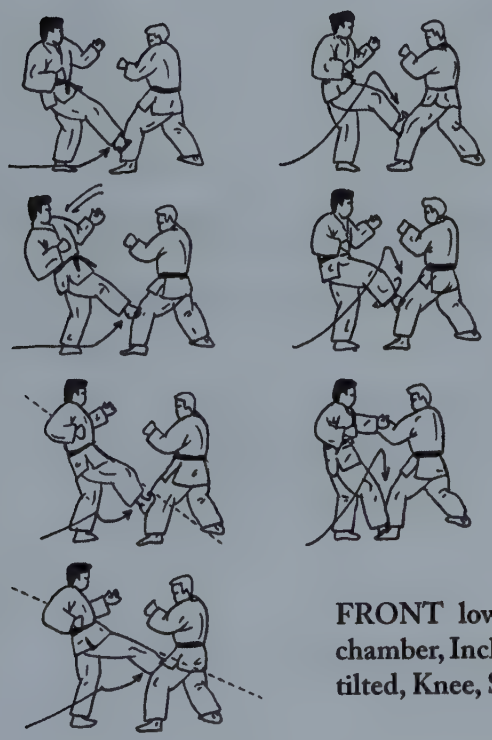
The Outward Ghost Groin Kick

The Phantom Groin Kick

The Uppercut Back Kick

The Back Ghost Lift Kick

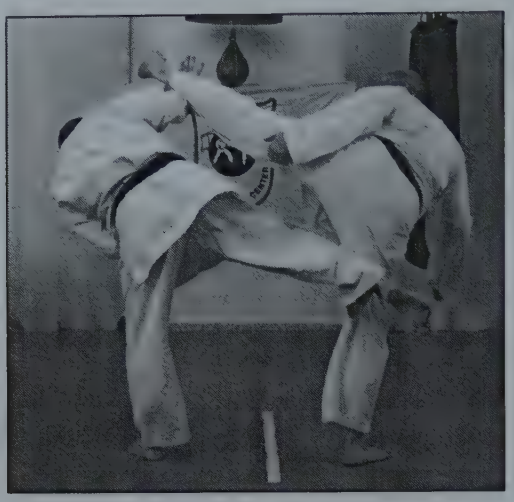
Recapitulating Table: Various Low Front Kicks



FRONT low kicks: Soccer, Full chamber, Inclined soccer, Outside-tilted, Knee, Stomp, Groin

Afterword

We have come to the end of our study of the specifics of low kicking. As mentioned, there are many more Low Kicks variations and uses, be it as Stop-Kicks, Flying Kicks or Ground Kicks, but categorization is very difficult for such a complex subject.



Low Kicks are ideal cutting Stop-kicks
– Roy Faige

The fight is won or lost far away from witnesses - behind the lines, in the gym, and out there on the road, long before I dance under those lights.

~ Muhammad Ali

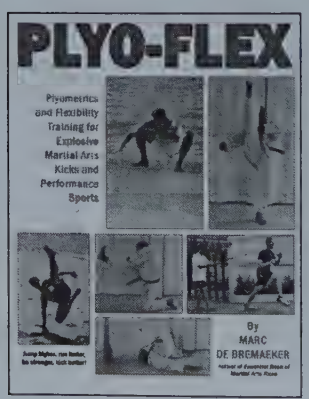
The author is trying to build a complete series of works that, once finished, could become an encyclopedic base of the whole of the Martial arts Kicking realm on which others could build and add their own experiences.

Any comment, addition, vintage photograph, anecdote or suggestion is welcome: martialartkicks@gmail.com

In his endeavors the author has already penned:

1. The Essential Book of Martial Arts Kicks – Tuttle Publishing (2010)

2. Plyo-Flex Training for Explosive Martial Arts Kicks – Turtle Press (2013)



The following works are in preparation:

- Flying Kicks
- Stop Kicks
- Ground Kicks

Also Available from Turtle Press:

Plyo-Flex
The Art of Joint Locking
Muay Thai Fighting Strategies
Introduction to Tien shan Pai
Modified Wing Chun
Juji Gatame Encyclopedia
Survivalist Kung Fu
Explosive Muay Thai
Fight Back
Drills for Grapplers
Winning on the Mat
Wrestle and Win
Fighting the Pain Resistant Attacker
Total Defense
Conditioning for Combat Sports
Kung Fu Grappling
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Sendo-Ryu Karate-do
Power Breathing
Throws and Takedowns
Vital Point Strikes
Groundfighting Pins and Breakdowns
Defensive Tactics
Secrets of Unarmed Gun Defenses
Point Blank Gun Defenses
Security Operations
Ultimate Fitness through Martial Arts
Complete Kicking

Vital Leglocks
Boxing: Advanced Tactics and Strategies
Grappler's Guide to Strangles and Chokes
The Armlock Encyclopedia
Championship Sambo
Complete Taekwondo Poomse
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Boxing: A 12 Week Course
The Fighter's Body: An Owner's Manual
The Science of Takedowns, Throws and Grappling for Self-defense
Fighting Science
Martial Arts Instructor's Desk Reference
Solo Training
Solo Training 2
Fighter's Fact Book
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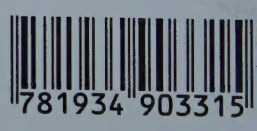


LOW KICKS

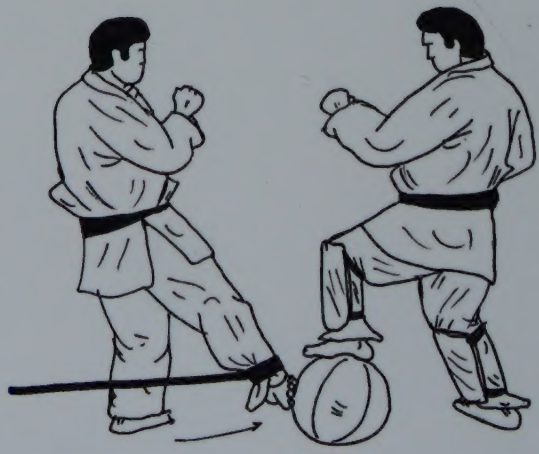
Low kicks are powerful, fast, and effective—exactly what you need to defend yourself in a real life confrontation. And because they are seldom used in sport fighting, they can be a surprising and valuable addition to your free fighting arsenal.

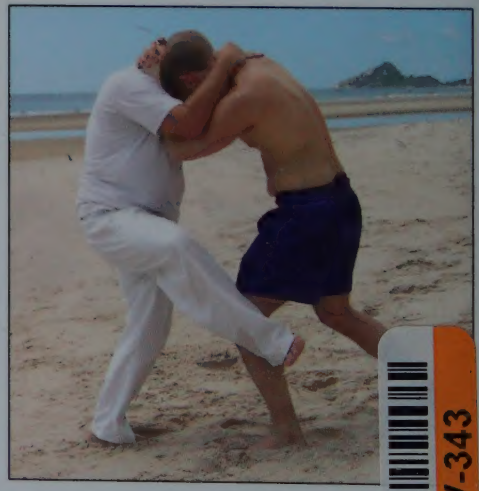
While they may seem easy to execute, not all low kicks are simply low versions of the basic kicks. There are specific attributes and principles that make low kicks work. Marc de Bremaeker has collected the most effective low kicking techniques from Martial Arts like Krav Maga, Karatedo, Capoeira, Wing-Chun Kung-Fu, MMA, and Muay Thai. In this book, he analyzes each kick in depth, explaining the proper execution and outlining applications and variations from self-defense, sport fighting and traditional practice.

Hundreds of examples illustrated by one thousand photographs and illustrations will help you master the important skill of low kicking and become a better and more well-rounded fighter regardless of style.

LEARN THESE ESSENTIAL LOW KICKS:

- Soccer Low Front Kick
- Front Low Kick
- Groin Front Kick
- High-Chambered Stomp Front Kick
- Tilted-Heel Low Front Kick
- Low Roundhouse Kick
- Low Straight-Leg Roundhouse Kick
- Low Straight-Leg Roundhouse Sweep
- Low Downward Roundhouse Kick
- Low Hook Kick
- Low Spin-Back Hook Kick
- Low Side Kick
- Low Side Stomp Kick
- Low Back Kick
- Low Back Stomp Kick
- Heel-Outside Low Kick
- Angular Kick to the Knee
- Front Pushing Stop-Kick to Knee-Scrape
- Flying Stomp Kick





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